

Reviewing One Hundred (Mostly) Hollyweird films: from *Citizen Kane* to *Citizen Four*

By Leftist Critic

Most of these reviews come from reviews on my IMDB account, LCMovieCrusader, many of which have spoilers, but not all. A small select group of reviews come from my WordPress blog, specifically for Woman Walks Ahead, Black Panther, Paths of Glory, Sorry to Bother You, Blackkkklansman, A Hologram for the King, Back to the Future, Black Hawk Down, Citizen Four, Free State of Jones, and Forrest Gump, some of which have been expanded to create a more complete review. Also included are two combined reviews, specifically looking at the six Star Wars films (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6), with possible review of other Star Wars genre films in the future, which come from my WordPress blog. Of those from IMDB, for two films I wrote multiple reviews: Arrival and Contact. Interestingly, the two reviews of Contact were allowed through by IMDB (which is owned by Amazon) but those of Contact, in which I called the film's director, Robert Zemeckis, an utter racist, were censored. Even so, they are contained within this collection of one hundred films, with a second compilation of films to come in the future, but I cannot give a specific date. I will, of course continue my readings of varied Marxist authors as well. With that, I hope you enjoy this collection of film reviews! Previous editions of this publication, in Volume 1 have included: "[Longstanding Ties And Laotian Revisionism](#)," "[A History of Protests Against Revisionism in the USSR](#)," "[Exposing the Revisionist Deception Part 2](#)," "[Exposing the Revisionist Deception Part 1](#)," and one [focused](#) on Julia Salazar. Previous editions in volume 2 focus on Julia Salazar with [a long version](#) of an article and a [15-page version](#). Originally this was called "reviewing one hundred Hollyweird films" but that it was revised to take into account that The Girl Who Leapt Through Time, Dodes'ka-den, and the Young Karl Marx are foreign films.

Preface

Note: This section is partially taken from the post on my blog on October 18, 2018 ([“The “Great White Hope” and the spread of U\\$ capitalist hegemony”](#)) and includes my own analysis in the reviewing of 100 films to follow.

Hollyweird, as conservatives and [Gil Scott-Heron](#) prominently call it, and its profit model fits right into [Antonio Gramsci](#)’s conception of cultural hegemony. He argued that “organic” intellectuals organize relationships to benefit the dominant class (either the bourgeoisie or proletariat), trouncing the “traditional” intellectuals who hold a “long-time monopoly on religious ideology, bonded to schools, education, morality, and other societal values.” For both the bourgeoisie and proletariat, they choose specialized individuals who organize relationships to benefit their class, specifically consisting of “organic” and “traditional” intellectuals, with the former type often being nationalistic. Both types of intellectuals operate in what Gramsci called the two levels of society, also called the superstructure: civil society and political society, with the dominant group (either the bourgeoisie or proletariat) exercising hegemony over society and/or through the state, with their deputies, the intellectuals, trying to garner “spontaneous” consent given by the masses to the general direction the dominant group has “imposed on social life.” In [my previous article on cultural hegemony](#), I argued that the producers of *The Simpsons* constituted organic intellectuals, as they are not those who “serve as organizers of “masses of men,” “confidence” in their business, consumers in their product, and so on.” This is because the latter group would constitute the so-called “captains of industry” or the capitalists themselves, allowing PR people to serve as such organizers and gain “confidence” in their business (and brand). Rather, organic intellectuals enforce the hegemony of those above them, with a particular division of labor while the bourgeoisie dominates, subjugating and “liquidating” antagonistic views, with these intellectuals possibly coming from private associations. At the same time, the organic intellectuals of the proletariat can come from political parties or other institutions of a proletarian

nature. Vladimir Lenin, Josef Stalin, Mao Zedong, Fidel Castro, Kim Il Sung, Thomas Sankara, and many others, would be examples of such organic intellectuals in the annals of human history who have been on the side of the proletariat. However, there are likely no “traditional” intellectuals among the proletariat, as they mainly serve as clergy and other religious figures. As it stands today in our capitalist world, those who exercise the dominant ideology through social institutions, such as banks, universities, TV stations, newspapers, film studios, police departments, courts, prisons, legislatures, and private associations, to name a few, are the bourgeoisie, working to “socialize people to consent” to their dominance. This is done in order to ensure that the masses accept the “beliefs, explanations, perceptions, values and moral norms” of capitalism itself, keeping the bourgeoisie in power, in control.

You may ask, how does this relate to Hollyweird? Well, with producers in Hollyweird, whether in film, TV, or some other form of media, constituting “organic” intellectuals, they are cementing relationships which benefit the bourgeoisie and enforce capitalist hegemony. However, while Elon Musk can be called a visionary and a “thought leader,” he is just a capitalist out for the bottom line, not an “organic” intellectual. Those who are intellectuals, in this case, are the deputies of the bourgeoisie, not the bourgeoisie itself. The cultural hegemony of capitalist ideology continues to permeate through our society. It cannot be escaped as much as we may see ourselves as “immune,” but it becomes part of our mind, as we recognize the corporate brands which populate the landscape and then begin to accept the state of the world as it stands today. That brings us to this review of 100 films, mostly from Hollyweird. This serves as a bit of bridge between the last article on my blog in February to the present, as I have been relatively busy with my own studies. While I admit that my views of Marxism are relatively fragmented, I am learning all the time, more and more, and will continue to engage in self-criticism of the old articles on my blog to make sure I am saying the right things and that there are no errors or viewpoints that I said in the past which I now longer agree with. That being said, enjoy the following guide to 100 films, which starts with a table of contents, then has 161 pages of reviews.

Table of contents:

- **Looking into socially-conscious films**..... page 7
 1. *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*: A great film in its own right..... pages 7-10
 2. *American Madness*: Socially-conscious and more than a "balanced drama"..... pages 10-12
 3. *Forbidden*: Powerful drama but very depressing..... pages 12-13
 4. *Platinum Blonde*: A romance with strong social commentary..... pages 13-15
 5. *The Miracle Woman*: One of Capra's best—a biting criticism of religion.....pages 15-16
 6. *The Power of the Press*: The power of the press strikes again! pages 16-17
 7. *The Strong Man*: A silent film but still powerful..... pages 17-18
 8. *It Happened One Night*: Enjoyable comedy with social commentary.....pages 18-20
 9. *The Hate U Give*: A relevant film for our times..... pages 21-22
 10. *All Quiet on the Western Front*: A strong antiwar film for the ages.....pages 22-24
 11. *The Young Karl Marx*: A wonderful movie to be remembered..... pages 24-25
 12. *Paths of Glory*: An antiwar film? pages 25-26
 13. *Roma*: Terrible movie supposedly about "class in Mexico"..... pages 26-27
 14. *Sorry to Bother You*: A wonderful anti-capitalist film..... pages 27-30
 15. *Citizen Kane*: Classic movie that wasn't what I thought..... pages 30-31
 16. *It's a Wonderful Life*: Another one of Capra's classics..... pages 31-33
 17. *If Beale Street Could Talk*: A timely 1970s romance critical of racism.....pages 33-34
 18. *The Time Machine (TV Movie)*: Conveys a powerful anti-war message.....pages 34-35
 19. *Fahrenheit 11/9*: Some positive parts but overall mixed feelings.....pages 35-36
 20. *Roger & Me*: From smarmy rich people to suffering Michigianians.....pages 36-38
 21. *Soylent Green*: From knowledge to commodity..... pages 38-40
 22. *Into the Wild Green Yonder*: A strong finish to the series of Futurama straight-to-DVD movies..... pages 40-42
 23. *Colette*: A feminist movie, perhaps? page 42
- **Delving into the world of sci-fi**..... page 42
 1. *The Girl Who Leapt Through Time*: Interesting take on time travel..... pages 42-43
 2. *Thrill Seekers*: One of the best time travel movies I have watched in a while.....pages 43-44
 3. *Just Imagine*: Better than other science fiction movies but still weak.....pages 44-45
 4. *Somewhere in Time*: Sad but another interesting depiction of time travel.....pages 45-46
 5. *Contact*: An enjoyable movie, disturbing takeaway..... pages 46-48
 6. *Contact*: Enjoyable but highly problematic..... pages 48-49
 7. *The Time Machine*: Exciting but protagonist is self-serving..... pages 49-50
 8. *The Time Traveler's Wife*: An interesting take on time travel..... pages 50-51
 9. *Arrival*: Thoughtful, unlike other Alien-Human Contact Films..... pages 51-52
 10. *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*: Riveting movie about human-alien contact.....pages 52-53
 11. *Turn Back the Clock*: One of the best time travel movies ever made.....pages 53-54
 12. *Twelve Monkeys*: Has some promise but still lackluster..... pages 54-56
 13. *Multiplicity*: Interesting concept but not a strong movie..... pages 56-57
 14. *The Terminator*: White masculinity and a shoot 'em up..... pages 57-58
 15. *Terminator 2: Judgement Day*: Another annoying Hollyweird shoot 'em up.....page 58

16. *Cosmopolis*: A strange, bizarre movie..... pages 58-59
17. *Spy Kids 4-D: All the Time in the World*: Ok action movie, but not a comedy.....pages 59-60
18. The first collective review of the *Star Wars* movies: is it fascist?.....pages 60-77
19. The second collective review of the *Star Wars* movies: is it anti-fascist?.....pages 77-80
20. *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*: Predictable drama which is only passable.....pages 80-82
- **Analyzing dramatic films**..... page 82
 1. *Untamed*: A compelling drama that marked Crawford's first starring role.....pages 82-84
 2. *If You Could Only Cook*: A riveting romantic drama..... pages 84-86
 3. *The Bitter Tea of General Yen*: A compelling drama with "interracial tension," even with yellowface?pages 86-88
 4. *I'll Never Forget You*: A romance & interesting time travel movie..... pages 88-90
 5. *Repeat Performance*: A romance movie but also about time travel..... page 90
 6. *Berkeley Square*: Only a somewhat interesting film..... pages 90-91
 7. *The Shining*: Classic Drama and Horror Movie..... pages 91-92
 8. *A Hologram for the King*: addressing class and racial elements in Saudi societyPages 92-94
 9. *Mary, Queen of Scots*: A "feminist" period drama? pages 94-95
 10. *Bender's Big Score*: A compelling animated drama..... pages 95-97
 11. *The Beast with a Billion Backs*: Robots, heaven, and existential questions.....pages 97-99
 12. *Memento*: Nolan explores the depths of memory..... pages 99-101
 13. *Possessed*: From the factory to the big city..... pages 101-102
 14. *Safe in Hell*: A riveting pre-Code drama..... pages 103-105
 15. *Frankenstein*: A "marauding" monster and the "madness" of science.....pages 105-107
 16. *The Phantom President*: From musical comedy to political satire.....pages 107-109
 17. *Trouble in Paradise*: From petty thievery to enveloping romance.....pages 109-110
- **Laughing with/at Hollyweird**..... page 111
 1. *For the Love of Mike*: A funny movie but not as strong as others I have seen.....page 111
 2. *Happy Accidents*: Enjoyable comedy with social commentary..... pages 111-112
 3. *Click*: A great comedy..... pages 112-113
 4. *High Anxiety*: Not as funny as other Mel Brooks films but still good.....pages 113-114
 5. *The Meaning of Life*: Funny, witty, satirical, and relevant..... pages 114-116
 6. *That Certain Thing*: Funny but also too weak for my taste..... pages 116-117
 7. *The Crimson Permanent Assurance*: Funny opening to "Monty Python's Meaning of Life"..... pages 117-118
 8. *Big News*: A comedic talkie about the news business..... pages 118-119
 9. *Jaberwocky*: An absurdist comedy for the ages..... pages 120-121
 10. *The Simpsons Movie*: Witty and funny, harkens back to Golden Age of The Simpsons pages 121-124
 11. *Bender's Game*: A funny film which is more than a story of a "fantasy world." pages 124-126
- **The superhero genre strikes again!** page 126
 1. *Doctor Strange*: Interesting beginning, horrible last half..... pages 126-127
 2. *Wonder Woman*: Interesting concepts but overall a terrible movie.....pages 127-128
 3. *The Avengers*: Another annoying superhero movie..... pages 128-129
 4. *Ant-Man and the Wasp*: Perhaps even better than *Ant Man* (2015)pages 129-130

5. *Ant-Man*: Superhero movie but not like the others..... pages 130-131
6. *Deadpool*: Not the typical superhero film..... page 131
7. *Deadpool 2*: Funny, parody of superhero genre..... pages 131-132
- **Trash/weird/other films**..... page 132
 1. *Back to the Future*: Capitalist hegemony and time travel for white racists.....pages 132-134
 2. *Forrest Gump*: A white male sexist fantasy..... pages 135-137
 3. *Black Panther*: Terrible counterrevolutionary film..... pages 138-139
 4. *Black Panther*: Counter-revolutionary trash..... pages 139-142
 5. *Blackklansman*: Copaganda “at its finest” pages 142-146
 6. *Hyperfutura*: Some interesting concepts but overall a piece of trash.....pages 146-147
 7. *Joy*: Triumph of capitalism and capitalist feminism? page 147
 8. *The Fisher King*: A problematic magical fable..... pages 147-148
 9. *Eye in the Sky*: Good acting but weak "ethical dilemma"..... pages 148-149
 10. *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*: An odd, strange film..... pages 149-150
 11. *Woman Walks Ahead*: A “pro-indigenous” film which is actually anti-indigenous
..... pages 150-151
 12. *Free State of Jones*: Another white savior movie..... pages 151-154
 13. *The Meg*: Worst movie ever..... page 154
 14. *Ladies of Leisure*: A solid movie but weaker than Capra's other works.....page 155
 15. *First Man*: A powerful movie which had unnecessary criticism..... pages 155-156
 16. *Half Nelson*: Strange but depressing..... pages 156-157
 17. *Rain Man*: Autism, Aspergers, and Rain Man..... pages 157-158
 18. *Room*: Haunting but rewarding? page 158
 19. *Snowden*: Annoying, boring film..... pages 158-159
 20. *A Streetcar Named Desire*: A classic film..... pages 159-160
 21. *Manchester by the Sea*: Well-acted, un-sympathetic protagonist..... page 160
 22. *Dodes'ka-den*: Strange but interesting..... pages 160-161
 23. *Hanna*: Action, shooting, and gore..... pages 161-162
 24. *Old Man & the Gun*: Slow-paced movie showcases Redford's last role.....pages 162-163
 25. *Black Hawk Down*: a pro-military narrative to attack..... pages 163-165
 26. *Citizen Four*: Snowden and the allure of Hollyweird..... pages 165-167

Looking into socially-conscious films

Mr. Deeds Goes to Town: A great film in its own right

Name of film: *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*

Date film was first shown: 1936

Date reviewed: March 6, 2019

Rating: 10 out of 10

Throughout the day I watched this classic Frank Capra film. Some of the 120+ reviews here on IMDB, with most giving it 8 to 10 stars, say this is a "dress rehearsal" for Capra's *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1938). However I feel that is mistaken because while the films have similarities in that both protagonists come from small towns with promise, this is fundamentally different in its plot and execution. I would actually say this movie has similarities to his earlier work, *Platinum Blonde* in they are both about a man adapting from his homely life to that of fortune. If I remember right, the wealthy patrons, capitalists to be frank, called him "Cinderella Man," or something like that, in that film as well.

This film begins with a simple unmarried man, Longfellow Deeds (played by Gary Cooper), from a small town of Mandrake Falls, Vermont, and inherits a \$20 million fortune from his deceased uncle who died in a car accident. This changes his life completely as he leaves his small town behind and moves to New York. He is in the care of a law firm and other fellow rich people like attorney John Cedar (played by Douglass Dumbrille), an ex-newspaperman named Cornelius Cobb (played by Lionel Stander), and MacWade (played by George Bancroft), along with the butler, Walter (played by Raymond Walburn). He is careful with his newfound money, skeptical of the opera house which loses money and other relatives, Mr. Semple (played by Jameson Thomas) and Mrs. Semple (played by Mayo Methot) who claim to have a stake to the money.

But one conniving reporter, Louise "Babe" Bennett poses herself as "Mary Dawson," a "damsel in distress" (a clear sexist motif) which Deeds quickly falls for as this is his weak spot. She uses that to

get close to him and write slanderous stories calling him "Cinderella Man." Just like in Capra's other movies *The Power of the Press* (1928), *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1938), and *Platinum Blonde* (1931), the power of the press is undoubtedly demonstrated, as an instrument of slander and despicableness. Her articles are so strong that she shapes public opinion about him in the city, making him look like a bumbling fool. Dawson/Bennett is clearly a complete rat, only wanting these stories so she can get a week of paid vacation. While he clearly falls for her quickly, she does not begin to fall for him until later on and even then she continues to write her trash stories! What befuddles me is how Deeds doesn't deduce that clearly she is the conduit of the information, especially since he says at one point that he only talks to her. How can he not put these things together? Is he that naive? When he finds out the connection, on the day she quit, he is utterly heartbroken and becomes despondent.

At one point in the movie, Deeds is confronted by a desperate farmer (played by John Wray) who catches him at a time he was just about to leave town for good, threatening him with a gun, challenging him to do something with his vast fortune. Then after he begins giving away his fortune to people in need, giving each person 10 acres of land, some seed, and a horse. Of course this is seen as tantamount to socialism by the Semples and their attorneys who declare that Deeds is "insane." After this, he becomes despondent and depressed as he has not only been declared "insane" but Dawson/Bennett was revealed to be a rat who just used him for his articles, not wanting anyone to defend himself.

Soon the show trial against him begins, with "strong evidence" supporting the claim he is "insane." Only Dawson/Bennett testifies on his behalf. As it seems like everything is in the bag and Deeds is accepting his fate, Dawson/Bennett comes to the judge's stand, asking to give Deeds, who has been silent up to this point, a chance to speak, then he begins to mount his defense, saying that everyone has a twitch, including the judge (who colors in Os in letters), the psychiatrist who doodles, and Mr. Semple who twitches his nose, among others. He further clarifies with the sisters who called him "pixelated" that everyone in his hometown of Mandrake Falls is the same, making him not "crazy"

in the slightest. He defends his action of giving away his newfound fortune, saying that the rich people like the Semples already have enough wealth and that people in need to be helped in a sort of small property-owner way, giving people land. This is anything but socialist but is an action to make these people some sort of petty bourgeoisie with such property, but it is not capitalist enough, clearly for the Semples and their friends. This makes it no surprise he punches the lawyer for the Semples, Cedar, in the face. Even with this and his unorthodox way of defending himself, he is still declared "sane" and he wins the case while the rich people scowl.

As the movie comes to an end, after he is whisked out by a crowd in jubilee, he comes back and picks up Dawson/Bennett, with both embracing each other and kissing as the sisters from his small town call him "pixelated." In some ways this is strange after all the horrible things she has done to him through her reporting. This is a clear happy ending to this film, in-keeping with Capra's films which generally have happy endings. Even so I rate this as 10 because it is such a powerful drama.

I have some further comments. For one, I enjoyed the lampoon of psychiatry in this movie, making them out to be the ones engaging in complete quack science. It reminds me of how Mel Brooks in *High Anxiety* (1978) makes fun of psychiatrists as sexist, chauvinist pigs. The social commentary in this movie is strong, especially with the fact of a man going from nothing to something in an instant but also not forgetting his roots. He longs to be working-class again, without the worries of money, although he easily fits into his rich life unlike reporter protagonist in *Platinum Blonde* (1931), who continuously struggles. I also don't think the portrayal of philanthropy as something that is altruistic and caring about others is good, although it is not nearly as bad as Forrest Gump in the movie of the same name whom steals an idea from his dead Black army buddy, Bubba, to start a successful shrimping business, while he cares little about the world around him. Deeds in this movie is like Dickson (played by Walter Hudson) in *American Madness* (1932) who claims to be a socially-conscious banker or George Bailey in *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), the head of a small savings-and-loans bank in the town of Bedford Falls. I would also like to say that it is unfortunate there are no

people of color in this film as I could tell but we also must keep in mind this was the norm in Hollyweird at the time.

And with that my review concludes with a recommendation that people watch this powerful drama and take it in themselves.

American Madness: Socially-conscious and more than a "balanced drama"

Name of film: *American Madness*

Date film was first shown: 1932

Date reviewed: March 5, 2019

Rating: 10 out of 10

Throughout the day I watched this classic socially-conscious film. Larry41OnEbay-2 was right when they described in 2010 as a "socially conscious collaboration" between writer Riskin and the director, Frank Capra and a "cornerstone of great films to come." While they are also write that the film is not as dated as one would expect, it is more than a balanced drama "with some comedy" but rather it is a much more powerful movie.

This film, which is echoed in one of Capra's later films, *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946) when George Bailey (played by Jimmy Stewart), runs a small bank and is what you could call petty bourgeoisie. In this movie, Thomas Dickson (played by Walter Huston) runs a "socially-conscious" bank where he cares more about his depositors than his stockholders which makes certain people on the bank's board of directors ansy and wanting to oust Dickson, putting the bank on more "stable footing" which is code for screwing ordinary, working people. Dickson, like Bailey, will not stand for this, so he stands strong against the board. Unfortunately the bank's accountant/main cashier, Cyril Cluett (played by Gavin Gordon) owes money possibly to the mob/mafia/organized gang who intimidate him into helping them rob the bank that night. At the same time, Matt tries to be sweet on Dickson's wife, Phyllis, which chief teller Matt Brown (played by Pat O'Brien), an ex-con, accidentally sees when he walks into the room. Before Matt closes up the vaults, Cyril changes the locks on the bank vault so they

will open at 12:05 AM, and disables the alarm, that night, so the gangsters can rob the bank, resulting in the death of a lonely security guard. That night, Matt confronts Cyril in his apartment, imploring Phyllis to not see Cyril as it would ruin Dickson.

In the movie that follows, since Matt, whom is soon to be engaged with a fellow bank employee named Helen (played by Constance Cummings), is an ex-con he is blamed for the robbery. When word of the robbery of \$100,000 dollars breaks out, this number is quickly inflated to \$200,000 by the telephone operator (played by Sarah Edwards) and like a game of telephone, it ultimately leads people to think the bank will be insolvent, leading to a bank run with people in sheer terror about their money being gone. The bank of board of directors is almost ready to oust Dickson at this point and he tries to calm the "mob" (as he calls it) of people demanding their money be withdrawn. Unfortunately, he loses faith in the bank and his marriage after he learns that his wife Phyllis (as he thinks she is engaged in an affair) went to visit Cyril that night after Cyril admits his involvement in the robbery and his \$50,000 gambling debt. Despite his wife's pleading, just in time before he commits suicide, he remains glum, and only has his spirit uplifted when he sees huge deposits being made in the bank again, thanks to the work of Matt and Helen at calling rich folks to do a favor to Dickson (and the bank), which restores people's confidence, ending the bank run. As such, the board of directors also gains confidence in Dickson as well.

By the end of the movie, everything has gone back to normal, with Matt and Helen set to marry, Phyllis and Dickson ready to go on a honeymoon trip. The question remains however: what will come of the \$100,000 that was stolen and what will come of Cyril who was involved in the crime as a conspirator? This is not altogether clear. This movie undoubtedly shows the social tensions and financial pressures at the time for ordinary people...and the dependence of banks on the rich, who literally bail them out. But, what does this mean ultimately? What I'm trying to say is that it is hard to say what the takeaway from this movie should be. Are there socially-conscious bankers out there?

Should the banks be trusted to keep your money safe? Can such small businesspeople, what can be called the petty bourgeoisie, be altogether trusted? I'm not completely sure myself.

Even saying all that, this movie is a strong socially-conscious film which stands the test of time.

Forbidden: Powerful drama but very depressing

Name of film: *Forbidden*

Date film was first shown: 1932

Date reviewed: March 5, 2019

Rating: 10 out of 10

In my attempt to watch many of Frank Capra's films, this one was up next. I was already intrigued by the story description on here, on IMDB, which pulled me in. At first this seems like a typical drama, a young woman who works as a librarian, Lulu Smith (played by Barbara Stanwyck), whom goes on a vacation to Havana with the little money she has, about \$1200 dollars. She quickly runs into Bob Grover (Adolphe Menjou), who accidentally goes in her room because her room number is 66 and his is 99, leading them to call each other '66' and '99.' A passionate courtship follows but Bob has a horrible secret: he is married and is the local district attorney, worrying about a scandal that might get printed in the paper (another movie that talks about the power of the press, a common theme in Capra's films). So their relationship becomes forbidden, hence the film's title.

What follows is a moving drama but also one of the most depressing. First Lulu has a child due to the fact that she eloped with Bob, but refuses to give her name or Bob's name at the maternity hospital, just calling herself "Jane Doe" and her daughter as Roberta. Soon, however, she foolishly agrees to give the child to Bob and his wife, while she goes to work for the newspaper where a man named Holland wants a relationship with her. There is no doubt this affects her psychologically as a sort of inner pain she holds. Twenty years pass as Roberta grows up and Bob becomes a more prominent politician, on his way to becoming the governor, while the forbidden relationship continues, although it is seemingly not sexual.

While Lulu supports Bob's political ambitions, feeling was part of it all, he expresses regret and wants to reveal the truth while Holland wants to print a story smearing the governor by revealing the truth. She soon grants Holland's wish by marrying him, just as he had wanted. However it all comes to a head when she confronts Holland on the story the paper is ready to run, revealing that the child is Lulu's, not Bob's wife. Holland, in a rage, pushes her into a wall, injuring her but this does not stop her as she somehow finds a gun (why was that in the house?) and ultimately shoots Holland through a door and kills him which also seems relatively improbable as the door was closed so she wouldn't know where she was shooting. Somehow she gets away with murder, which is never really explained, and burns the records that would have undergirded the story, ending it. She visits Bob on his deathbed, they recall good times and he gives her part of his will, which bequeaths half of his estate to her. As he dies, she walks away, down the street, reads Bob's note, tears it up, and walks away, blending into the crowd like everyone else.

With this ending, this has to be one of the most depressing Hollyweird movies I have seen in a long time. I typically like movies that do not have happy endings, which is why I like Ken Coach's films, which this movie reminds me of. You could say that this film is part soap opera, but even so it is still a powerful drama worth seeing and I would argue one of Capra's better films. This is despite the fact that social commentary is not as poignant as his other films, although there is again a mixing of classes going on here.

Platinum Blonde: A romance with strong social commentary

Name of film: *Platinum Blonde*

Date film was first shown: 1931

Date reviewed: March 4, 2019

Rating: 10 out of 10

When reading the description of this 1931 Frank Capra movie on IMDB my interest was piqued. This movie has some similarities to his 1928 silent film, *The Power of the Press* but also its

own movie with its own storyline. Stewart "Stew" Smith (played by Robert Williams) gets a story covering the affairs of the Schuyler family, specifically revolving around Anne (played by Jean Harlow). While this starts as a news story it becomes a romance between Stew and Anne, where each of them thinks they can change the other: Anne trying to change Stew from a brash working-class reporter to a high society man and Stew trying to bring Anne into his intellectual milieu.

Anne's efforts seem mostly a success until Stew's friend, Gallagher (played by Loretta Young) comes to one of the parties, making Anne jealous as she had no idea that Gallagher was a pretty woman, dumbly thinking it was a man, in part because Stew never noted her gender. This begins to take Stew out of his adaption to high society and he soon throws his own party with those the Schuylers would probably call "low-class scum," his newspaper friends and acquaintances. This party is ended when the Schuylers come back from their party with hoity-toity people and Stew abruptly leaves Anne and their mansion where he has been staying, with Gallagher in toe. The movie ends with Stew and Gallagher in love as Stew rejects alimony from Anne as a matter of principle.

As I described in the title of this review, this movie has a strong social commentary. The reporters are trying to get whatever story they can get, clearly working-class, while the rich, like the Schuylers look down on those below them as a sort of scum. While Anne is a spoiled, privileged person, Gallagher is shown much more sympathetically as a smart, intelligent woman who is a good friend of Stew. While the latter woman ultimately becomes domestic but she also is intellectual, helping Stew with his play. Now I'm not sure if it would be a situation like in *Colette*, the film last year, where Gallagher wouldn't get credit for the play, but they clearly collaborated together. Anne seems to have no intellectual interests of her own and just likes her high society life. As such this movie does poke at the absurdities of such a life while it is also funny at times.

As would be expected, there were no people of color in this movie, like the Frank Capra movies I have seen so far, apart from *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946) with the weirdly funny (almost like a racial caricature) maid and the young black kid who was an elevator operator in *Ladies of Leisure* (1930).

If I had a chance I would definitely watch this movie again.

The Miracle Woman: One of Capra's best—a biting criticism of religion

Name of film: *The Miracle Woman*

Date film was first shown: 1931

Date reviewed: March 4, 2019

Rating: 10 out of 10

This pre-Code movie by Frank Capra is one of my new favorites, with all of the actors and actresses, especially the female protagonist, do a great job in their roles. It doesn't engage in the typical social commentary of his films, which mostly revolves around class. A number of other films by Capra, like *The Strong Man* in 1926, show religion positively but this one does not in the slightest. Florence Fallon, played by Barbara Stanwyck, loses faith in God (specifically Christianity) when her father, the pastor of a local church, dies, attacking those in the church as hypocrites and phonies who caused him to die. She soon agrees with Bob Hornsby (played by Sam Hardy) to be the face of an evangelical racket called the Temple of Happiness. People who come up to the stage are "saved" while government officials are paid off to get their "church" to stay there.

But one blind man, John Carson (played by David Manners), possibly near-sighted, whom is saved by her sermon on the radio from suicide, is different. He comes up on stage to a lion's cage, when Florence (called for short Sister) and she blesses him. Soon they fall in love in this drama and romance. Like many of Capra's movies there are some laughable parts.

Florence has a breakdown, realizing she is defrauding people and that she will leave John when she leaves the country. Her manager in the process tries to stop her by turning off the lights but the triggers a fire, burning down the "temple," ridding the world of such criminality. The fact that she is literally saved by John from death is almost like she is an angel being brought up to heaven but that John is her angel, in that sense. As the movie ends, she is seen as working for the Salvation Army and her romance with John continues. My guess is that since the "temple" burned down, Sister Florence

could not be charged with criminality as the records were in the "temple," meaning that she got off scot-free.

But apart from all this what can we take away from the movie? The big question is what and whom can we believe in? If those who preach the gospel, as they call it, are phony (whether the fellow church members at the beginning of the film or Sister Florence herself and her "temple") then what should we believe? So a major theme is belief and the fact that you will go far if you stick with your convictions, as Sister Florence does at the end. Such a biting criticism of religion is unique in Hollywood especially due to the Hays Code from 1934 to 1968 (harder to enforce after the 1950s), replaced by the MPAA rating system that year. As such it stands out in that regard. It also reminds me of films like *Network* (1976) in which they purpose to Howard Beale that he be the "mad prophet on the airwaves" or the histrionics of Steve Shorter in Peter Watkins 1967 hard-to-find film, *Privilege*, to give two examples.

I would recommend this film to anyone and everyone I could find!

The Power of the Press: The power of the press strikes again!

Name of film: *The Power of the Press*

Date film was first shown: 1928

Date reviewed: March 3, 2019

Rating: 10 out of 10

While this is a silent film, the music (which sets the mood) and actions make this an effective drama. In the days of front-page propaganda in "mainstream" media and "alternative facts" in publications like Breitbart, this Frank Capra film is one of his better ones. It shows the part of the press and how it can be manipulated by bad actors, with one man manipulating one young aspiring newspaper reporter named Clem Rogers, played by Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., to say that Jane Atwill (played by Jobyna Ralston), the daughter of the mayor, John Atwill (played by Edward Davis), killed a local district attorney. But then the plot thickens as those opposing the mayor, the campaign of Robert

Blake (played by Philo McCullough), plotted together to kill the District Attorney (played by Charles Clary). This drama, mixed with romance is a perfect movie not only of the silent era but about the press.

You could say it unnecessarily glorifies the press, but truth be told, it actually says unorthodox reporting, like literally kidnapping the murder suspect is ok, as is going on an unlicensed investigation of a murder case. As such while those associated with the camp of individuals who oppose the mayor are sleazy criminals who almost seem like a form of Mafia (one is literally a bootlegger), the truth is that the reporter himself literally commits a crime by breaking and entering into a house where Marie Watson is being held and then engages in kidnapping which is also somehow ok, which makes little sense. Those who detest Rogers, like his editor Robert Edeson, as do his work colleagues Bill Johnson (played by Dell Henderson) and the sports writer (Spottsiwoode Aitken).

All in all, this movie is a classic worth watching even if you aren't used to watching silent movies.

The Strong Man: A silent film but still powerful

Name of film: *The Strong Man*

Date film was first shown: 1926

Date reviewed: March 1, 2019

Rating: 10 out of 10

As I continue to watch Frank Capra's films, I watched this film this morning. I've watched a number of early Charlie Chaplin films and this is similar but also different from those films although there is still a lot of slapstick comedy. Like most silent movies, the music really sets the mood. While the first part of the movie is just about a soldier trying to find a woman whom sent him a letter, while he was fighting in Belgium during WWI, coming to New York City in 1918 or 1919. He goes through a series of adventures like a wealthy woman who gives him a wad of money and goes to extensive lengths (letting him carry her up the stairs) so she can get the money back while he is working a

vaudeville production, seemingly for little money. The movie goes on to make hilarious jokes time and time again like the protagonist putting on a form of stinky cheese rather than something else, to get himself ready for his performance.

But there ends up, as is the case in most of Capra's films, a social commentary, specifically of a pastor, leading the moral, peaceful townsfolk, standing up against gamblers and other swindlers. The protagonist is in the middle of this, eventually siding against the crowd whom are patrons at the big establishment, a bit like a saloon/game house, as on threatens to put Mary Brown, the woman who sent him a letter in Belgium, on display. The forces against the "money changers," as the pastor calls them, are ultimately successful.

This movie also reminds me of a later Chaplin film, *The Blind Girl*, as Mary Brown in this movie is also blind, which becomes a part of the plot as well.

While the protagonist becomes a police officer at the end, enforcing the law, the town goes back to normal. I'm not sure what to take away from that but I can say this movie deserves a 10-star rating due to its slapstick comedy and social commentary.

It Happened One Night: Enjoyable comedy with social commentary

Name of film: *It Happened One Night*

Date film was first shown: 1934

Date reviewed: February 26, 2019

Rating: 10 out of 10

If you are having a tough day, this movie brightens in a nice way.

To build off the other reviews, I first agree with comix-man's 2002 review that "Frank Capra's idealistic outlook on life is evident in his films" and that this film was one "where anything can happen, where being a nice person is all you need to succeed." I would also say that the true state of the county was undoubtedly indicated, as that review states, because of hard times for many, especially the clash of classes. I also agree that the "viewer is left with a feeling of hope for humankind, even if its only that

a person's ideals could be used to make such a film." But there's more than that. This film was a great comedy which I actually wasn't expecting because the other Capra films I've watched, like *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939), and *You Can't Take It With You* (1938) are not comedies in the slightest.

At the beginning of the film, Ellie Andrews (played by Claudette Colbert) escapes a boat that her father is keeping on, swimming away, leading to a hunt to find her and bring her back. While on the journey she meets alcoholic newspaper journalist, Peter Warne (played by Clark Gable), who, once he finds out who she is, is willing to help her as he sees a story for himself since he is down on his luck (he was just fired from his newspaper job). Ellie is a bit uptight and prude at first, while Peter is more open and willing to deal with life as it is, but this quickly changes as Ellie is more than willing to oblige and let him serve as a "protector" of her of sorts. While you could say this is a bit sexist, the fact is that Ellie in this situation has no other choice since she has very little money (she admits at one point that she only has \$4.00) after her bag was stolen. Additionally, she is not treated as an object as despite the time they stay together, Peter never advances on her, and it is her that later advanced on him, saying she loves him and cannot live without him. She plays a smart and witty character. In one of the film's funnier scenes, Peter holds out his thumb, asking to hitchhike, but everyone ignores him, while Ellie gets a ride by showing her leg off to an approaching driver, whom instantly pulls the break and stops for them. In the way this plays, it actually shows her smartness, as she knows what men will want even though she is just using it as a means to an end. She even ignores the clear advances of Shapeley (played by Roscoe Karns) with almost an eye roll. Having the blanket, the "wall of jericho" as Peter calls it, divide both Peter and Ellie as they sleep in the same room, and is one of the film's funnier moments.

There are a number of interesting themes in this movie. For one, perhaps Capra is showing those struggling represented by Peter's character, whom has a dark side. Not only does he beat up a man and steal his car (after the man was out to steal his suitcase), but he intimidates Shapeley by acting

like he a mobster of some kind even though he is completely bluffing, and steals carrots from a farmer, to name the most notable criminal acts. While these actions, you could say, were necessary for them to continue their journey, they also are not portrayed in a positive light. The review by comix-man, which I mentioned earlier, says that the hostile reaction of the wife of Zeke (played by Blanche Friderici), the hotel owner, to letting Peter and Ellie stay with only the promise of being paid, means they "cannot afford freeloaders." That may be true, but I would add that it also shows the breakdown of common human decency, as if they had been fair they still would have let her stay the night and leave the next morning, in a time of extensive suffering. Additionally, the fact that Peter is a struggling working-class man and Ellie is an heiress to extensive wealth is a clash of classes. And while they get along, Ellie's bourgeois habits lead to her snootiness at the beginning, although she seems more concerned about her well-being and happiness. The latter is indicated when she tells Peter at one time that "I'd change places with a plumber's daughter any day" which is a bold thing for someone in her class position to say, as she would be forgoing all her class privilege!

Both Ellie and Peter both play off each other very well. In terms of the story, the ending is no surprise, which I need'nt spoil, it isn't much surprise that her marriage with the air pioneer Westley (played by Jameson Thomas) is in doubt. This is especially the case when Peter is humble enough to only ask for the money he paid on the trip, not the whole reward. With that, I'm seeing some similarities to Mel Brook's *Spaceballs* (1987), especially when Lone Starr only wants to be paid enough to "lunch, gas, and tolls," rather than the 1 million Space Bucks. Even the marriage scene in this movie seems to be echoed in *Spaceballs*, although perhaps marriage scenes in Hollyweird movies are similar.

All in all, I would definitely watch this movie again and I look forward to watching Capra's other films, like *American Madness* (1934) and *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (1936). I would recommend this film to anyone.

The Hate U Give: A relevant film for our times

Name of film: *The Hate U Give*

Date film was first shown: 2018

Date reviewed: February 3, 2019

Rating: 10 out of 10

Recently there have been a number of films which have highlighted racism in the US, like pro-cop *Blackkkklansman*, Boots Riley's masterpiece, *Sorry to Bother You*, and recently released *If Beale Street Could Talk*. This film only did ok at the box office but that should not dissuade people from watching this film. It was interesting to see the main character, Starr, divided between her participation in the white world symbolized by the uppercrust private school she goes to and her home community. I also enjoyed the transformation of her from a witness of a horrible murder of her friend by a white police officer to an activist who was fighting for justice. While at the end the big drug lord goes to prison and community rebuilds from the riots, as Starr calls it, the social relations change little. So, in some ways this movie brings hope but in others I'm not completely sure what the takeaway should be. This differs from a movie like *Sorry to Bother You* that is optimistic about future struggles of workers against their masters. All in all, this movie was worthwhile, especially with a balanced focus on drugs/gangs in communities.

There is so much more to say about this movie, however. I would add that this movie is interesting because of its depiction of crime within the Black community, as gangs have a strong hold on the community, with many involved in dealing drugs. In more radical speak, that would make them part of the "lumpen" as they would be involved in criminal activity, even though this is clearly and purely for their survival, as it should not held against them. I also liked the parts where the white schoolchildren at Starr's private school engaged in a Black Lives Matter protest not because they truly sympathized with the cause but rather because they wanted to get out of class, showing their absurd privilege in this case. As the protagonist, Starr bridges the white and black worlds, another sort of

double-consciousness (idea of Starr Version 1 and Starr Version 2 as she puts it), echoing what W.E.B. DuBois wrote about in *The Souls of Black Folk*, embracing her black roots most of all by the end of the film. She also bridges this gap by liking what is undoubtedly a "white thing" by a white woman: the Harry Potter series, a series which has no prominent people of color from what I can remember. For those who wouldn't watch *Sorry to Bother You*, perhaps because it is too sci-fi for them and seems weird, this film can serve as a bit of a substitute to say the least.

And with that, my review concludes, as I feel I accurately covered the bases of this film and analyzed it briefly to provide those interested with a look into the film itself in hopes that those who watch it see it.

All Quiet on the Western Front: A strong antiwar film for the ages

Name of film: *All Quiet on the Western Front*

Date film was first shown: 1930

Date reviewed: March 8, 2019

Rating: 10 out of 10

Last night and this morning I watched this 2 hour and 16 minute film in its entirety. I wasn't really sure what to expect from this movie, but it is undoubtedly somber, a criticism not only of the horrors of war but also of the uber-patriotism/jingoism that leads men to die for a cause they don't even believe in. In 1914, these young German men go from the classroom, where their professor (played by Arnold Lucy) encourages them to enlist for the "good of their country" to the training camp, and then to the battlefield of World War I. They are not automatons however, but are angry at their treatment by the officer training them so they take him and put him in the mud on the night before they are set to go out to the front. They arrive there utterly naive, thinking it will be a licking, but soon realize and live the horrors of war, as these men decline rapidly to a smaller amount as the war continues onward, with them hunkering in their trenches.

Most of the movie takes place on the battlefield, mirroring in some ways Terrence Malick's *The Thin Red Line* (1999), which focuses on World War II, or *Paths of Glory* (1957), which focuses on World War I, with Kirk Douglas playing a starring role, the slight antiwar themes in *Hacksaw Ridge* (2016), or those of the absurdist film on the WWII-era, *Catch-22* (1970). As for this film, it depicts charge after charge by the soldiers against the enemy as artillery blasts surround them, killing people right and left whom are not killed by enemy machine guns. All in all, it is an utter slaughter, making you think: is this really worth anything? What are they really fighting for? In one of the film's pivotal scenes, the soldiers discuss who and what the war is all about, not coming to a conclusion about why it happens, with one saying that the generals of both sides should fight each other in their underpants, making it an utter absurdity. At another, a soldier asks why he stabbed another French soldier who was "no different than I," another young man supposedly trying to fight for "his country." Clearly nothing is sacred, not even a cemetery, where the German soldiers fight "the enemy."

Perhaps to indicate the brotherhood of the male soldiers and to make this antiwar drama more effective, women are rarely mentioned at all, as it is seen as an "all-male affair." In an absurd scene, the soldiers swim across the river to visit a group of presumably French women, talking with them and such, but that is all, as they quickly leave. They show that even with the war, their chauvinism and need to be appreciated by women has not abated. At the same time, the movie shows the horror of war is not confined to the battlefields or trenches but to the hospital where many people languish until they die, saying that they are brought to the "dying room" (as one soldier calls it)/"bandaging room" (as the doctors and nurses call it) and never come back. One of the men, Paul Bäumer (played by Lew Ayres) goes home on furlough, visiting his sister (played by Marion Clayton) and mother (played by Beryl Mercer), realizing that people do not know the real state of war. The telling moment is when Paul speaks before the class of the professor whom had pressured him to go to war, telling the reality of the situation and the horrors of war, where he has been for 4 years (indicating it is 1918), as many of his fellow soldiers have died, with the young students calling him a "coward."

Feeling disillusioned, he goes back to the front, to stay there for four more days until his time is over, with the 2nd Company, he was part of, being extremely under-staffed as most have been killed. He soon finds Stanislaus Katczinsky/"Kat," as they talk about how people do not recognize the futility of the war, while Kat gets injured by a bomb dropped by an aircraft. But he is later is killed by a second explosion! As the film ends, Paul reaches out, only to be killed by an enemy sniper, with the final shot showing the company marching to the front for the first time, along with a shot of the cemetery. The latter indicates the lasting horror of war, which only leads to death and destruction. This film is more than "greatest anti-war statement ever created" or a "sincere, emotional film," to take from reviews by bkoganbing and kian_ef, but this rather a film that makes a strong statement against the institution of war, perhaps more than any other film created, being realistic about what happened rather than sugarcoating it like Peter Jackson did in his 2018 documentary, *They Shall Not Grow Old*. With that, my review of this film comes to its conclusion.

The Young Karl Marx: A wonderful movie to be remembered

Name of film: *The Young Karl Marx*

Date film was first shown: 2017

Date reviewed: January 19, 2019

Rating: 10 out of 10

This movie was great for many reasons. As a person who is interested in Marx and his theories this movie was very interesting. I liked how it honestly portrayed the respective romantic relationship of Marx (with Jenny), and the one of Engels (with an English worker named Mary Burns). Perhaps the movie was too weak on Proudhon but it tells an important part of Marx's life which I have not seen any other movie cover. There should be the young Mao, the young Stalin, and the young Lenin next!

There's much more to say about this film than this short little paragraph. This film is a compelling, moving drama to say the least. Not only does August Diehl do a great job playing Karl Marx but so does Stefan Konarske in playing Friedrich Engels and Olivier Gourmet playing Proudhon.

At the same time, Vicky Krieps plays a powerful role as Jenny, Hannah Steele as Mary and all the rest. This film brings up the obvious contradiction of Engels criticizing capitalism while his livelihood is dependent on his father's factories which obviously exploit workers while Marx on the other than is literally poor almost all the time, relying on Engels to survive. This is to an extent brought up in Howard Zinn's 1999 play *Marx in Soho* which I watched part of some time ago, but this movie hammers home these points even more.

I think with this film as a start, it would even be possible to do a whole series on Marx and Engel's collaboration over the years. If there could be a 195-minute film about John Reed (played by Warren Beatty) and Louise Bryant (as Diane Keaton) called *Reds* in 1981, making such a series is not beyond question. However, obviously there would be no reason for Hollywood producers to have a film positively portraying Marx, socialism, or communism, as they get more from their red-baiting, which dates back years and years. There is a reason that this is a foreign film rather than a film coming out of Hollywood, as is obvious and evident.

With that, I think this film has been adequately reviewed for the time being and its review of a 10 out of 10 is fully justified, meaning this review has come to a close.

Paths of Glory: An antiwar film?

Name of film: *Paths of Glory*

Date film was first shown: 1957

Date reviewed: October 15, 2018

Rating: N/A, review taken from "[The "Great White Hope" and the spread of US capitalist hegemony](#)" post on the Leftist Critic blog, with some additions (paragraph 2) on March 29, 2019

The final film I will talk about in-depth here is [Paths of Glory](#), a film where Kirk Douglas plays a French general (and former lawyer) who defends three soldiers from "cowardice in the face of the enemy," in an effort to save their (and fellow soldiers) lives from a fruitless charge across no-man's land to their deaths. While the film is undoubtedly antiwar in that it shows the horror of war, the

absurdness of a trial against these three individuals which is meant to just protect the commanders, and their eventual death by firing squad to restore “order.” The latter makes the film pessimistic as the war (in this case WWI) continues on, with the soldiers portrayed as sexist beasts (at the end of the film) toward a captured German woman, who are entranced by her when she begins to sing. At the same time, it makes a point that following orders is not always good, as those who didn’t follow orders and stayed in their trenches are saved from slaughter. The commander who ordered the charge to take “Ant Hill” which killed half of Douglas’s soldiers is sacked, but the person who sacked him does not understand Douglas’s anger, offering him the sacked commander’s job. It is a film very different from other antiwar films, so it is unique in that way. It is unlikely a film like this would be made today.

There is more than this one paragraph which should be said about this film, the seventh feature film Stanley Kubrick had directed in his career. This film reminds me a bit of *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930) although that film is much more antiwar. Apart from Kirk Douglas’s role as a lawyer, Ralph Meeker as Corporal Philippe Paris, Adolphe Menjou as Major General Georges Broulard and George Macready as Brigadier General Paul Mireau, to name two of the most prominent people in the film, also carry the film as well. This film has some similarities with Kubrick’s 1960 film, *Spartacus*, although that obviously had a different time and place. With that and having many other reviews to fill out, I’m going to leave this review a bit shorter and end it there.

***Roma*: Terrible movie supposedly about "class in Mexico"**

Name of film: *Roma*

Date film was first shown: 2018

Date reviewed: January 19, 2019

Rating: 2 out of 10

I watched this movie late last year and will try to recount it the best I can. The movie is set in 1970s Mexico, I believe, with rampant class inequality. A few maids work for a well-off bourgeois family, one of whom is the focus of part of the story. She works very hard and without much

recognition by her employers, this bourgeois family, who demean her, as does her boyfriend who is an ass to her. She is almost a slave to this family. Almost in a sick way the movie focuses inordinately on her pregnancy, including on her stillbirth and saving the children of the bourgeois family. The movie ends with little change in her life while she (or any of the characters) supposedly don't take part in the turmoil in the country for the most part. All in all, this movie was a waste of time.

I guess what annoyed me the most about film, apart from what I said in the previous paragraph, is that it was in black-in-white. In general, in this age of color film, it makes no sense to make a movie in black-in-white about the 1970s when if the film had come out at that time then it would have been in color! So, that's a major error on the part of the director and all those making this film. While some people liked this film for one reason or another, it obviously was over-hyped just like the recent report by special counsel Robert Mueller as the Democrats shout "Russia! Russia! Russia!" and have nothing to show for it, just grumbling along the way.

In the end, this film was more depressing than not. I'm not saying the film has to end with a happy ending with everyone smiling as I've watched enough Ken Loach films, like *Kes* (1967), *Raining Stones* (1993), *Ae Fond Kiss* (2004), *The Wind That Shakes the Barley* (2006), and *I, Daniel Blake* (2016) to know that films do not have to have happy endings. But, there should have at least been a ray of hope provided to the viewer. Otherwise watching the film or even recommending others see it is a waste of time as the impact of the film fades away like pedals falling off a flower. With that I end my review and stand with my rating of 2 out of 10.

Sorry to Bother You: A wonderful anti-capitalist film

Name of film: *Sorry to Bother You*

Date film was first shown: 2018

Date reviewed: October 15, 2018

Rating: N/A, review taken from "[The "Great White Hope" and the spread of U\\$ capitalist hegemony](#)" post on the Leftist Critic blog.

This brings us to Boots Riley's [*Sorry to Bother You*](#), a film which really blew me away in its wonderfulness. The film is strongly [anti-capitalist](#), directly talking about exploitation of the proletariat, racism, sexism, and the like. The main character, Cassius "Cash" Green (played by Lakeith Stanfield), is a black man living in present-day Oakland who is renting a room with his uncle, and living with his girlfriend Detroit (played by Tessa Thompson), who works as a sign-twirler. In order to live there, Cash gets a job as a telemarketer for RegalView, where he learns to cultivate his "white voice," which brings in the money, catapulting him to "power caller." In the meantime, his fellow comrades (like Salvador "Sal" played by Jermaine Fowler, and varied others) who also work at the company, are trying to organize themselves against their horrible work situation. In almost an act of betrayal, Cash goes to a higher level, where Worry Free, a company which uses literal slave labor, is the main client. He is still a telemarketer, but he is selling capitalists (and governments) the use of WorryFree's slave labor and weapons, with Langston (played by Danny Glover), a black man with one eyepiece, looking a bit like the monopoly man, as his mentor of sorts. While Cash rises to this level, the workers are striking in front of the building every day, with police having to literally club them out-of-the-way so Cash and other "power callers" can get to work. Undoubtedly, this causes strain and Cash and Detroit's relationship, leading Detroit to stand up for herself and leave him. This is unlike *Back to the Future* or *Forrest Gump*, which are sexist for reasons I have previously explained, a positive to say the least. Detroit does end up going out with the union organizer, Squeeze (played by Steven Yeun) and while she and Cash do come back together, the fact that she drew a line in the sand, standing up for herself in such a manner, is [undoubtedly feminist](#), bucking the general trend of Hollyweird. It is no coincidence that Detroit is most radical throughout, as part of The Left Eye, a group graffiting WorryFree's posters. This is despite some complaining that the film does not pass [the Bechtel Test](#), when a "feminist piece of media must...have at least two women in it, who...talk to each other, about...something other than a man." Even through this film does not pass this test, it does not mean it cannot still be a strong and powerful, worthy of praise, despite this shortcoming.

As the film goes into its last stretch, when Cash goes to a party hosted by Steve Lift, the CEO of WorryFree, the capitalist plan is revealed: to turn workers into half horse, half people hybrids (called “equisapiens”) which will be more obedient, by having them snort something that looks like cocaine but is not cocaine. Cash is chosen to as what Lift calls a deceptive “Martin Luther King” of these hybrids who will keep them in line. More likely, Cash would mirror the role of Curtis, a White man, in Joon-ho Bong’s [Snowpiercer](#), who leads the people in a rebellion on the train which turns out to be a ruling class mechanism of population control. That movie is touted as anti-capitalist by some, and while class is a major factor of the movie, it falls short just like Neill Blomkamp’s [Elysium](#), which features a story of capitalists who live in a bubble outside Earth while the masses suffer on the decaying Earth below. Back to the film. Cash is disgusted by Lift’s creation of these beings, but Lift says it just standard capitalist practice. After he leaves his phone behind at Lift’s McMansion, which records equisapiens being abused by Lift, he shares this video on reality show and other networks...but it just ends up with WorryFree’s stock rising! With all seeming to be lost, the union of workers makes one last stand in front of RegalView, with Cash calling on the equisapiens to help as the police beat up the protesters, with these beings freeing Cash and his comrades Squeeze and Sal. With this victory, it seems that everything has returned to normal, with the capitalists suffering this defeat, but Cash turns into an equisapien. He, in the credits, leads a group of equisapiens to Lift’s McMansion, telling him the phrase of “sorry to bother you” used in his telemarketing, attacking Lift to get revenge for the horribleness he has brought upon the world.

In this way, *Sorry to Bother You* is optimistic about fighting capitalism, having no White savior models or anything like that. As such, the film’s producers, Nina Yang Bongiovi, Kelly Williams, Jonathan Duffy, Charles D. King, George Rush, and Forrest Whitaker, can be said to be organic intellectuals. While they are not serving as deputies who are pushing capitalist ideology on the masses, they are not necessarily from the proletariat either. The movie, which has garnered \$17.5 million [as of October 11th](#), has made a profit of about 547%, as the budget for production [was only](#) about \$3.2

million! Hence, as such, it is still a capitalist product which was distributed by capitalist Larry Ellison's Annapurna Pictures domestically. Comcast's Universal Pictures (due to the fact the Universal's direct owner, NBCUniversal is owned by Comcast) and a Universal Pictures' subsidiary Focus Features distributed it internationally. Still, the film clearly bucks the overall capitalist ideology, going beyond a criticism just of the orange menace, but of the system as a whole, even talking about the idea of false consciousness throughout. One could say the same of a film like Peter Weir's [*The Mosquito Coast*](#), which lost money. As a summary, in that film, the main character, Allie Fox (played by Harrison Ford) criticizes consumerism and believes a nuclear war is imminent, brings his family to Belize, where they try to create a utopian civilization based around an ice machine he builds, but this is later destroyed and his family is basically left destitute, traveling on a boat through the jungle. There is much more than that, but this is still a good summary starting point. Additionally, a film like [*V for Vendetta*](#), critical to an extent of the current capitalist system, was distributed by Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc., a subsidiary of WarnerMedia, which has been owned by AT&T since [earlier this year](#).

***Citizen Kane*: Classic movie that wasn't what I thought**

Name of film: *Citizen Kane*

Date film was first shown: 1941

Date reviewed: January 19, 2019

Rating: 10 out of 10

Before watching this movie I only knew of it from a reference in the episode in season 6, episode 5, where Sideshow Bob becomes Mayor. The 10+ minute intro that is a newsreel sets up a dual story, one in the "present" (1941) of a reporter trying to figure out what Rosebud means and snapshots of Kane's life, a bit like one's memory. This is especially relevant with people talking of "fake news" today as Kane goes through life buoyed by a paper that literally prints fake news. Orson Welles carries the movie as Charles Foster Kane, the wealthy newspaper publisher whom doesn't care about anyone else but himself. The ending of the movie, with the meaning of Rosebud clear to the viewer but not

found by the reporter is gone, almost like it dies with Kane. This movie was detested by William Randolph Hearst as it is based loosely on his life.

There is more to say about this movie than one paragraph. For one, this movie is relatively compelling drama which pulls you in. Of course Orson Welles as Kane does a great job, showing his ruthlessness to dominate over others, but I also think that Dorothy Comingore as Susan Alexander Kane (Kane's second wife) and Ruth Warrick as Emily Monroe Norton Kane (Kane's first wife) play important roles as well. The focus on the press a bit resembles other movies of the era like *The Power of the Press* (1930), *Mr. Deeds Comes to Town* (1936), *Platinum Blonde* (1931) and *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1938) to name two I can think of off the top of my head. I could name the other actors as well, but the performances of Welles, Comingore, and Warrick are the most striking in my opinion, although others undoubtedly played their part.

The political themes for this film are obvious. Some critics have said that this film reflects the reflects "the battle between intervention and isolationism" waged in the U.S. especially since it was released six months before the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and that Kane's one fate of "wealthy and lonely, surrounded by the detritus of European culture and history" is the fate of "isolationism" (which should more accurately be called non-interventionism). I think that is a valid point, but I also think other critics are right to point out that this film focuses on manipulation, by mass media, of public opinion, and of the political process. In that way, this movie almost foresees films like *Network* in 1976, the pinnacle of mass media manipulation just to get a better rating-share to bring more profits to "uneasy" stockholders whom believe the world is a business.

With that, my review comes to an end, with what I have said so far justifying a rating on this film of a 10 out of 10.

It's a Wonderful Life: Another one of Capra's classics

Name of film: *It's a Wonderful Life*

Date film was first shown: 1946

Date reviewed: January 19, 2019

Rating: 7 out of 10

I watched this movie late last year around Christmas and I would like to pose a review here. Like *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939) and *You Can't Take It With You* (1938) it focuses on the common man and claims they can have a stay in the system despite rich people like Jim Taylor in the first film and Mr. Kirby in the second. This film features George Bailey (Jimmy Stewart) as a buildings and loan banker, who fights against the evil banker of the town, Potter. He, George, has a guardian angel who shows what it is like if he was never born. Still the movie is not really socialist or a criticism of capitalism at all, as the banker suffers no consequences for causing problems in the town, so it is strange American smultzy movie.

Having said that, I think that the film deserves more than one paragraph to explain the 7 out of 10 rating. As a person whom generally likes science fiction, especially moves that feature time travel, I especially liked the part of this movie which was an imagined world if George had never been born. Not only does this show the effect one person can have on multiple lives, but the town he comes to is a bit like a version of Las Vegas, with Potter doing all he could to get money, turning the town into a sort of playground of sleaze. While this undoubtedly causes George some discomfort, he is more concerned with an absurdist, laughable quest to get people to remember him. This includes chasing down Mary, his wife in the regular world, whom is working as a stereotypical librarian, in what makes him out to look like a sexual predator. One of the best scenes is where he goes into a bar, asked people if they know whom he is, and when he says that everytime a bell is rung an angel is born, the bartender hilariously rings the bell 30 times. In some sense, I feel like that bartender with this movie, especially with its ending which is supposed to make you feel good with “what you have.”

There's another aspect to this movie which is rarely mentioned is the weirdly stereotypical role of “Annie” (played by Lillian Randolph), a Black female housekeeper whom makes “funny” wise cracks. Obviously this is highly racist, that the only prominent Black character in this film was literally made a

laughingstock, a blind spot for Capra which was in-keeping with the societal mores of the time. I'm not alone in this. As Jesse Daniels of *Racism Review* wrote in 2009, saying that as Annie offers all of her life savings to George which is followed by the "I been savin' this money for a divorce, if ever I got a husband!" line, this speaks to "the fictive notion in the white imagination that black women have no families of their own, but live to serve their white masters."¹ Luckily Lillian Randolph went onto enjoy a "long career in radio, film and television" with many of her roles offering "a very different view of black women's struggle," to quote from Daniels. I think it is worth bringing this up because very few of the reviews on here mention this website, with one, by son_of_cheese_messiah in 2013, only calling her "a black servant" and not even giving her a name!

With that, my review of this film comes to a close.

If Beale Street Could Talk: A timely 1970s romance critical of racism

Name of film: *If Beale Street Could Talk*

Date film was first shown: 2018

Date reviewed: January 19, 2019

Rating: 10 out of 10

I don't say this often about movies but I was blown away by this one completely and utterly. Sure it is a romance between a loving black man and black woman in New York in the 1970s. But there is more than that. It is made evident there is racism everywhere: from police out to get you on the streets, in prisons, in the court system, in housing, and everywhere else. At the same time it is not sentimental while the male and female leads (she narrates it) have important roles. The White Jewish lawyer is no help, the Black families (one of the man, the other of the woman) are almost at each other's throats at one point. Even so, there is a recognition of Black sisterhood especially when it comes to pregnancy and the importance of family. Perhaps there is even the feeling of despair like when the

¹ See Jesse Daniels' post on *Racism Review* on December 25, 2009 titled "[“It's a Wonderful Life: Honoring Lillian Randolph”](#)" for more information.

Black mother goes to Puerto Rico to talk to the housekeeper and spooks here or the demons, in a sense, facing the man in prison. All in all, this movie is definitely worth seeing and should be praised.

There's more to say about this film. I would say this film is even more compelling than the last film by this director, Barry Jenkins, *Moonlight*, which came out in 2016. However, I can't say it is different than his other film, *Medicine for Melancholy*, which came out 2008, but I will watch that shortly and write a review on here without a doubt. This film focuses more on the surroundings and happenings around the characters than just their dialogue, which is an interesting way of framing the movie as a whole and is, arguably very powerful. Saying all of this I would like to hear any criticisms of this film because all I could find so far are overwhelmingly positive reviews, so that might cause me to change my opinion slightly on this film.

This film, like many other films which have come out in recent years, is abundantly relevant to the present. Not only because it is based on James Baldwin's 1974 novel also named *If Beale Street Could Talk*, but because it further humanizes the Black experience, something which is still lacking in Hollywood films despite improvements in recent years with films coming from Black directors, apart from Jenkins, like Spike Lee, Ava DuVernay, Steve McQueen, Boots Riley, and Ryan Coogler, to name a few. With that, my review of this film comes to a close.

The Time Machine (TV Movie): Conveys a powerful anti-war message

Name of film: *The Time Machine*

Date film was first shown: 1978

Date reviewed: January 25, 2019

Rating: 9 out of 10

After watching the 2002 rendition of *The Time Machine*, I thought I would watch this as well. While it is clearly in a 1970s frame and dated in that way, it contrasts with the 2002 movie. In that film, the protagonist is self-centered, only caring about saving a person he would have loved. Kinda pathetic. While this movie lacks in graphics in terms of time travel, almost like you are going through a sort of

drug trip when time traveling, and is perhaps too selective on the time periods shown (he only travels to the 1692, 1855, and an unknown time in the future), portrays the Eloi as White (why?), and shows the Morlocks as people literally wearing cheap masks, it has a powerful and staying anti-war theme. That makes it a positive in my book. So for that, I would recommend the film.

Saying all of this, I would say that this made-for-TV film had John Beck, playing as a protagonist, Dr. Neil Perry, was strong, but the effects are as bad as some of those Star Trek episodes from the 1960s with cheesy sets. Perhaps the anti-war message was more important than not, although it is depressing in the sense that those working at the military corporation he is part of (the Mega corporation) only care about using the time machine to gain advantage over their enemies. But this, generally to be expected. It follows the typical happy ending of Hollywood films. Otherwise, I don't have anything more to say about this film.

With that, I give this film a rating of 9 out of 10.

Fahrenheit 11/9: Some positive parts, but overall mixed feelings

Name of film: *Fahrenheit 11/9*

Date film was first shown: 2018

Date reviewed: March 16, 2019

Rating: 8 out of 10

After watching this Michael Moore documentary all the way through I feel conflicted. On one hand I think he did a good job focusing on the crimes Snyder did in Flint, the West Virginia teachers strike, or maybe even the shooting at Stoneman Douglas. On the other, it seemed this film was too stitched together in Frankenstein-like manner. I think it would have been better to divide it into chapters, like one could have been on the orange menace (the current president), one on Flint, one on school shootings (and the March for Our Lives), and one on the West Virginia teachers strike.

I like that this movie gives a good criticism of Obama and liberal establishment as they deserve to be criticized. Still I think he overplayed the progressive "heroes" like Ocasio-Cortez or Sanders

when he should have been critical of them too. Additionally I don't agree with his claim that the U\$ is a liberal country, which doesn't seem right in the slightest, as polls can be helpful but don't say everything. Even so I liked his use of clips, especially of media fawning the orange menace, and him coming clean about his own role in promoting him, with even Steve Bannon and Jared Kushner saying nice things about Moore at one time!

Of course there are the typical stunts like trying to put former Michigan Gov. Snyder under citizens arrest and spraying Flint water into the Governor's Mansion. This is just like his actions in Sicko where he goes on a boat with a bullhorn near Gitmo. I even think that the connection between the orange menace and fascism was good, even showing Obama as enabling what happened.

The final conclusion of the film, saying people should fight for a better U\$, rather than a focus on elections or voting which was a positive refresher. However, when he transitioned to the end he moved to the fake missile attack warning for Hawaii and then the Stoneman Douglas shooting, saying this was an emergency. The film ended on the face of one of the Stoneman Douglas young gun control advocates, which was a strange ending as the film probably should have ended 5 or 10 minutes earlier.

Moore has his celebrity and star power, having some credibility, making it clear he can't just be dismissed outright even though he is what you could call a "limousine liberal." With that my review of this film comes to an end.

Roger & Me: From smarmy rich people to suffering Michigianians

Name of film: *Roger & Me*

Date film was first shown: 1989

Date reviewed: March 20, 2019

Rating: 10 out of 10

Michael Moore's most recent documentary, Fahrenheit 11/9 is in some ways a return to Moore's first documentary, this film. While Moore looks younger and more youthful than he does now, along with a small camera crew maybe of only three people, he uses some of his typical filmmaking

techniques which come back again in *Bowling for Columbine*, *Sicko*, and *Capitalism: A Love Story*, along with his other films which I haven't seen as of yet. He tells his lifestory up to that point, including how most of his family worked at GM, his work on a small Michigan newspaper (*Michigan's Voice*), then working a short stint as editor of *Mother Jones* (the name of which he doesn't mention in the film if I remember right), saying he was fired because he wanted to have a column from a Flint autoworker in the magazine, and then moving back to Flint afterwards, leading into the events of this film. Moore has a simple mission: to get Roger Smith, the CEO of General Motors (GM), to visit Flint with him, seeing first-hand the destruction the layoffs from GM plants have caused. In the process of this he focuses on how the town is falling apart more and more, as more people are laid off and problems continue to spiral.

This film, which undoubtedly set a standard for documentaries to come, uses a combination of interviews and archival footage. With this, it's no surprise that the film was added to the National Film Registry by the Library of Congress, deemed to be "culturally, historically or aesthetically significant." Moore interviews people ranging from a woman whom sells rabbits as meat or pets in order to make ends meet, workers whom have been recently laid off, a PR man for GM, and assorted other figures, including celebrities, whom came to Flint to "assure" laid off workers that they had nothing to worry about. The documentary contrasts between the Flint Sheriff whom evicts people from their homes for not paying their rent to rich smarmy people who claim that all people need to do is "find a job" and they will be fine. At times it is a jarring contrast to say the least.

The documentary shows that GM is causing such destruction, justified by the cold-hearted PR man Moore interviews whom says that if they end up firing everyone in Flint to make profits, that's just how it goes. While I won't spoil the ending of the film, which provides a finale to Moore's quest to get Roger Smith to come to Flint, I will say the film shows that numerous people have been played/deceived, from the unions whom agree that cuts in worker wages is OK to the workers whom cheer on the last day of their work at a truck plant even as they are losing their jobs. With the workers

disoriented, with no one attempting to organize them, and crimes increasing, the jails balloon. At the same time, Flint tries its hand at tourism but ends up wasting millions of dollars on ideas that were going nowhere. With a doubt, with the layoffs, the city is falling apart, with people leaving in droves.

Unlike his other films, like *Bowling for Columbine*, there are no animated features in this film. However, it still packs the punch, perhaps even more than so than his other films. This film, on its whole, is compelling, although at times he seems he is straying a little bit off. Still this film is important because while it only focuses on one city, Flint, it is emblematic of what has become of towns across the Rust Belt. With that I highly recommend this film and bring this review to a close.

Soylent Green: From knowledge to commodity

Name of film: *Soylent Green*

Date film was first shown: 1973

Date reviewed: March 24, 2019

Rating: 10 out of 10

Last night I watched this movie and I was surprised at how good it was, leading to a rating of 10, which I rarely give to any films anymore. The film begins with a montage showing past modes of transportation and heavily implying that we are destroying our world. Following this is the setting of the film: New York City in 2022 with a population of 40 million people. Soon the focus is brought to on the protagonist: Detective Frank Thorn (played by Charlton Heston) and his friend, a "police book" named Sol Roth (played by Edward G. Robinson) who helps him get information on cases by looking through old records. Everyone in this society is barely making by (with Thorn himself stealing food, supplies, and other household goods from the places he goes to investigate), with half of the population of the city unemployed and so many people that it becomes a major plot point of the film. Thorn walks over people whom are sleeping in the stairwells time and time again, hammering it into people's minds. Perhaps this is a bit overwrought but it makes the point in this dystopia clear.

Thorn soon investigates a case where a rich man, William R. Simonson (played by Joseph Cotten) is killed by an assassin with a metal hook, talking to the woman living with him, who he calls "furniture" (the sexist name for women in this dystopia), Shirl, whom is played by Leigh Taylor-Young. As he continues this investigation through the rest of the film he is apparently tailed by someone, with those higher-up in the government putting pressure on his boss, Chief Hatcher (played by Brock Peters) for him to stop investigating. But this doesn't work. As he digs deeper he begins to see the reality, including Simonson's role in creating Soylent Corporation (which makes Soylent Green) and that he was well-connected man.

While a subplot of sorts is Thorn's romance with Shirl, where he finally recognizes her humanity (and perhaps that of all women), perhaps more significant to note is the subplot of Sol, an intellectual and former university professor. He visits what is called "the exchange," where paper records are kept, a remaining body of knowledge held within a public library. He talks to fellow patrons, learning the truth about Soylent Green. As he dies at the film's end, he urges Sol to find the reality by going to the waste facility where the deceased old people and riotous people (scooped up by garbage trucks of sorts) are sent for disposal. But this place is no waste facility as he quickly learns but it is a factory. He learns the terrible secret about soylent green...

He returns to the exchange but four goons whom want to kill him and shut him up attack. A struggle ensues but Thorn ultimately wins, saved only at the last minute by Chief Hacker. It is there he delivers the line that has made the film a classic since then: "Soylent Green is people!" while he raises his bloody hand. Humans have become the ultimate commodity and are slaughtered, then fed to other humans, showing that they are all "cannibals" of sorts!

There are a number of other themes in this film worth pointing out. For one, the scientists (whom say Soylent Green is "plant-based"), the government, and business are in cahoots with each other to sell this substance to the masses. There are some parallels to *Snowpiercer* where the "rebellion" of those on the train ends up being a population control tactic. Additionally, religion gives people no

solace as even the priest is tired of all the people coming to him for confessions. He is later killed by a goon because it is thought that he gave Thorn the confession of Simonson even though he did not at all. While I still think that overpopulation as a concept is racist, I think that this film still does a good job showing how humans are destroying the planet. With that, I end my review of this film.

Into the Wild Green Yonder: A strong finish to the series of Futurama straight-to-DVD movies

Name of film: *Into the Wild Green Yonder*

Date film was first shown: 2009

Date reviewed: April 2, 2019

Rating: 9 out of 10

After watching the three previous movies, each of which comprises approximately four standard episodes as noted by the Futurama Wiki, Bender's Big Score, The Beast with a Billion Backs, and Bender's Game, I decided to finish up by watching this film. I would argue that this film is the strongest of all four films, fully deserving of a rating of 9 out of 10, higher than the average rating of this film (7.3 out of 10). Billy West (voicing Fry, Farnsworth, Dr. Zoidberg, Leo Wong, Poker Sign-Up Clerk, and Nixon's head), Katey Sagal (voicing Turanga Leela), John DiMaggio (voicing Bender, Elzar, and Sal), Tress MacNeille (voicing Fanny, Boobs Vanderbilt, Justice Ginsberg's had, and Mom), Maurice LaMarche (voicing Donbot, Clamps, Headless body of Agnw, Morbo, and Kif Kroker), Phil LaMarr (voicing Hermes Conrad and Clarence Thomas's head), Lauren Tom (voicing Amy and Inez Wong), David Herman (voicing the Number 9 Man and Scruffy), and Dawnn Lewis (voicing LaBarbara Conrad) voiced their respective characters, along with guest appearances from Snoop Dogg, Seth McFarlane (not as himself), Penn Jillette, and Teller, along with Phil Hendrie (voicing Frida Waterfall, Hutch Waterfall, and the Encyclopod). I say that this movie is the strongest because of its overt social commentary. While Bender's Game had ample social commentary with Mom running a huge conglomerate that had control of all the dark matter in the universe (the primary form of fuel), along with criticism of high-minded scientists whom think they will save the day, this film is different.

I say that because this film has one villain whom is so self-absorbed he only cares about himself, a literal capitalist whom is helped out by the "earth" government (basically a stand-in for the U\$). Leela, one of the film's heroes, soon joins the eco-feminists whom are fighting off Leo Wong, as does Fry with his mind-reading powers and unreadable mind (because he became his own grandfather in "Roswell That Ends Well" (s3, e13).

As the movie goes on, there are occasional obvious pokes at Star Trek, as is common throughout the series, and the absurdity of secret societies/"conspiracy theorists," represented by the "League of Madfellows," all of whom you guessed it, wear tin fool hats. There's also a criticism of capitalism and military adventurism as well, the former through the fact the movie's villain is a capitalist and the government is supporting him, and the latter through Zapp Brannigan's reckless actions to chase the eco-feminists. In that way there is also a criticism of run-of-the-mill activism as not making sense, bad slogan writing, and message-writing. The eco-feminists, however, while they are facing what could be considered a class enemy are a cross-class group of those across occupations and incomes, some in the proletariat (like Leela and Amy), lumpen (the person whom is the smoking prostitute I believe), but others whom definitely have more money (like the co-TV anchor on network news), so it's not a straight class struggle here. I also liked the themes of environmentalism in this movie, feminism, and such, which made the movie stronger.

This film was also meant to cap the series as a whole, as the writers didn't know if it was coming back, and it does a pretty good job doing that. You can say, as Platypuschow wrote in December 2018, that this does no favor to your eyes and is a pathetic attempt at revitalizing the show "with wall to wall feature movies" but I think that is faulty reasoning. From the compelling plot to the antics of Bender's continual crime spree and danger-taking, this movie has a lot to keep you interested. I wouldn't say it's necessarily the most funny, but it is an effective drama to say the least.

With that, my review of this film comes to a close.

Colette: A feminist movie, perhaps?

Name of film: *Colette*

Date film was first shown: 2009

Date reviewed: January 19, 2019

Rating: 8 out of 10

Colette is about the famed French writer of the same name (Gabrielle Colette) whom is one of the ghostwriters for her husband, Henry "Willy" Gauthier-Villars and they get rich off the Claudine series. Keira Knightley plays a powerful role as does Dominic West, playing Willy. She has a wonderful bourgeois life but decides to go out on her own, leaving her overlord of sorts, her promiscuous husband, who is terrible. So in a sense it is a feminist movie, but in a limited and distorted way, to say the least.

But there's more to say about this film. They clearly did a good job putting you in that time and place when the movie is set, a bit like *Somewhere in Time* (1980) so that is laudable. They also, in certain scenes, frame it in such a way that it conveys a certain form of meaning about the plot and the character itself. I would say this biopic is definitely entertaining in the end, allowing you to sympathize rightly with Colette over Willy. Of course it doesn't cover all of her life, but I still think it is enjoyable enough to grant it an 8 out of 10.

With that, my review of this film comes to a close.

Delving into the world of sci-fi

The Girl Who Leapt Through Time: Interesting take on time travel

Name of film: *The Girl Who Leapt Through Time*

Date film was first shown: 2006

Date reviewed: February 19, 2019

Rating: 8 out of 10

While I generally don't gravitate toward anime, this movie was interesting. It shares some similarities with *Time Traveler's Wife* because time is unstable in the sense that the protagonist can only travel back a set number of times. It seems that you absorb the power to time leap from a future device. While she originally uses the time travel to benefit herself she later uses it to help others, ending up by running into another time jumper. So all in all, this movie has a simple but powerful storyline, although it doesn't attempt to make any political points and is bland in that regard.

In a lot of ways, this film has drawbacks. It is obviously intended for a young audience and is a bit absurd at times, sometimes to the detriment of the film itself. Even so, there is something compelling, to some extent, about this movie, which is why I gave it a rating of 8 out of 10 rather than 2 out of 10 which I gave the film *Roma*, to give one example. It reminds me a bit of the 2001 Japanese film, *Spirited Away*, in some ways, although that film was much stronger than this one.

Despite these positive elements I would not watch this film again. The main reason is its overall childishness and lack of themes that connect with wrongs within society as a whole. While the main character obviously has some anxieties about the future, the general nature of society itself is not changed, leading to only small changes which, at first, only benefit the protagonist. With that, my review of this film comes to a close.

Thrill Seekers (TV Movie): One of the best time travel movies I have watched in a while

Name of film: *Thrill Seekers*

Date film was first shown: 1999

Date reviewed: March 3, 2019

Rating: 10 out of 10

After watching the wasteful *Hyperfutura* tonight I gave this movie [called The Time Shifters on IMDB], also called the *Thrill Seekers*, a try and it exceeded my expectations. It isn't a comedy but it is an effective drama. I especially like the depiction of time travel, like in *Time Traveler's Wife*, as inherently unstable.

The changing of the disasters in the present ends up changing the future, causing major problems there, leading Grifasi (played by Martin Sheen) to send two agents named Cortez and Miller into the past to stop the protagonist. Even so, the protagonist Tom Merrick (played by Casper Van Dien) does the right thing by saving lives, although he does let one of the time-traveling tourists die when he stops the train accident but he does stop a plane crash. He even travels back in time from the disaster at the colosseum to save his son, a researcher named Elizabeth Wintern (played by Catherine Bell) and thousands of others. Even so, the grotesque tourism of those from the future visiting disasters of the past continues onward in the film's closing moments, showing that little has changed in that regard.

In terms of technology and other aspects of the movie it is funny to see it now, with signs advertising Zennith or early versions of portable phones, which we would utterly laugh at now. Additionally, the notebook that becomes a screen is a bit like the netbooks and tablets of the present. I'm not sure how one could communicate from the future to the present but it does make a good narrative device. The two agents chasing Merrick and Wintern do a pretty bad job to be honest...almost thinking he is dumber than he actually is.

If I got the chance I would watch this movie again.

Just Imagine: Better than other science fiction movies but still weak

Name of film: *Just Imagine*

Date film was first shown: 1930

Date reviewed: February 24, 2019

Rating: 6 out of 10

As part of the rash of science fiction movies I thought I'd give this one a try. While the costumes and sets are as bad, if not worse, from those of the Star Trek series in the 1960s, the story is a simple romance, as you'd expect. I like the prediction of Skype/video calls, but their version of what 1980 New York is nothing like the actual city in New York! We still haven't got to eating meals in pill form,

having the government choose your marriage partners, flying cars (the closest we have come is drones), and babies coming out of a machine of some type, eliminating the whole pregnancy process, when it comes to the U\$. This is a clearly depressing future.

Having the character who provided comic relief (woken up from his death in 1930 by doctors in 1980) was some help but the movie was still pretty cheesy. It was also part musical which I sometimes like but it was a bit annoying here. What makes no sense is how the protagonist wins his appeal and approval for marriage with spotty evidence (a captured Martian) they were on Mars, not even any rock or other samples. Anyway, this movie was only partially enjoyable and for the reasons I have previously described I probably would not watch it again.

Somewhere in Time: Sad but another interesting depiction of time travel

Name of film: *Somewhere in Time*

Date film was first shown: 1980

Date reviewed: February 23, 2019

Rating: 7 out of 10

In my series of watching time travel movies, I thought I would give this a try. It is a bit like *Time Traveler's Wife* in that time travel is unstable, but different in that time travel is induced by a form of hypnosis. The ending of the movie is sad, in that he is ripped back to the future (1980) rather than in 1912. But a sort of paradox is created. How could Jane Seymour's character, Elise McKenna, give Richard Collier (played by Christopher Plummer) a watch if Richard brought the watch back with him when he traveled in time, via self-hypnosis, from 1980 to 1912? That is a major problem with the storyline. But, otherwise, his rip of time from the past to the present could have been presented if he checked his pockets before he left to make sure none of the pennies said "1979" or anything like that. Then he could have stayed in the past. But otherwise this film is interesting in that Richard is simultaneously knows about what will happen and is there to observe Elise. It also is weird that Richard's character doesn't investigate into the woman that told him "Come Back to Me" until 8

YEARS after she told him that. Why couldn't he have traveled back in time in 1972 to 1912?

Additionally, it almost seems that Elise knows he will time travel back with the clues like extensively leaving a book about time travel which happens to be with the professor Richard had in college and the other clues left behind by the biographer of her. All in all, despite its problems, this movie is one of the more interesting depictions of time travel, requiring you to be in the specific right time and place.

There's a lot more to say than this about this film as I obviously need to fully justify the rating of 7 out 10. Some will obviously say, I predict, that this movie is a bit smultzy and another romantic drama, just like *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), to give one example. That is generally the case. However, this film has its positives. I like that the protagonist, Richard, can simultaneously know what will happen in the past and see it in the present, which involves a good amount of research on his part, something which I like as a person whom likes to do research on varied topics to support my viewpoints. This film is a bit absurd when it basically says that Richard dies of "heartbreak" at the end. No, he dies because he has literally been sitting in a chair for 3 to 4 days without eating or drinking, which obviously is what caused his death.

Otherwise, I can say that this film did a good job of putting you in the time and place of 1912, so if anyone wants to know what life in high society of 1912 was like, this film will be something you want to watch. I also find it interesting that in the book this movie is based on, Richard is dying of a brain tumor and it is a high possibility that his "time travel" was just a series of hallucinations caused by the tumor itself. This film doesn't really put much question in your mind that he didn't time travel, although such self-hypnosis to time travel is an awkward plot device which carries with it problems which differ from other time travel methods.

With that, my review of this film comes to a close.

Contact: An enjoyable movie, disturbing takeaway

Name of film: *Contact*

Date film was first shown: 1997

Date reviewed: February 10, 2019

Rating: [not known]

Declined/censored by IMDB for not meeting "contribution guidelines," with IMDB explaining that "your submission conflicted with one or more of our policies as stated in our User Review Submission guide Please review these policies before submitting again. Thank you for understanding our position."

After hearing a clip from the movie in one of Immortal Technique's songs, I decided to watch it all the way through this afternoon. Generally I liked the fact this movie focused on the efforts of a female astronomer and that Carl Sagan (and his wife Ann Druyan) were involved in the film's development. Jodi Foster pulled the movie through, as did Matthew McConaughay (likely misspelled).

But, after seeing Robert Zemeckis as the director, it made me think deeper about this film. What can you takeaway? Over half a trillion dollars was spent on building a machine, the first of which was destroyed, the second of which was funded by a capitalist whom had been creepily watching the female protagonist whom he considered an "investment." That raises a question: did the journey to another world even happen, through wormholes and did she meet an alien? Or was it simulated by the capitalist somehow? We never know, but it is rational to think that the congressman who says it is a hoax has a good point.

Additionally, considering Zemeckis is a clear racist as demonstrated in *Back to the Future I* where Marty McFly gives the black waiter the idea to be mayor and takes credit for the music which was started by a black rocker, basically saying that stuff black people accomplished was handed to them by white people and that they can do nothing on their own, and *Forrest Gump*, in the movie of his namesake, named after KKK leader Bedford Forrest and taking the idea of creating a shrimp company from a black man (Bubba) who died, it is no surprise to find problematic themes here. Basically, the use of money for science that does NOT benefit humanity is apparently ok, as Jodi Foster's character defends the former type of science! So, that is a problematic aspect, as is making the black female character an enemy of Foster's character. This is yet another white person's movie, the only difference

is that it is focused on a white man rather than a white woman. It is simply a white person's fantasy to put it plainly. Then there is the whole controversy over using Clinton's image, cutting it from publicly available clips, putting it into the movie.

In sum, this movie is enjoyable but problematic for the reasons I have previously stated. You can watch it if you like, but please realize its limitations.

Contact: Enjoyable but highly problematic

Name of film: *Contact*

Date film was first shown: 1997

Date reviewed: February 11, 2019

Rating: [not known]

Declined/censored by IMDB for not meeting “contribution guidelines,” with IMDB explaining that “your submission conflicted with one or more of our policies as stated in our User Review Submission guide Please review these policies before submitting again. Thank you for understanding our position.”

This afternoon I watched "Contact" after it was quoted in a song by Immortal Technique. So I proceeded to watch the movie. Jodi Foster was the protagonist and carried the movie through. While it was enjoyable I thought I had been played when finding the movie was directed by Robert Zemeckis.

With that I thought about the movie again. It has some problematic takeaways, apart from the controversy over the using of Bill Clinton's image, like praising science which doesn't help humanity. The main character, played by Jodi Foster, even argues for such science. Ultimately \$500 billion is spent on a machine, the first of which is destroyed by a suicide attempt and the second funded by a capitalist. This capitalist is pretty creepy as he has been watching Jodi Foster and literally considers her as his investment. While he dies, it is an open question of whether he manipulated the time spent by Jodi Foster in the machine. Did the journey even occur? Did she ever meet an alien? We will never know the answers to those questions.

Additionally the movie was a white person's fantasy, like a *Back to the Future* but in a different way. It was not outwardly racist like *Forrest Gump* where Forrest, named after KKK leader Bedford Forrest and takes the idea from his black friend, Bubba, to do a shrimping business.

While this movie has its positives like the idea of emphasizing science as discovery but it has problematic aspects as I have previously discussed.

The Time Machine: Exciting but protagonist is self-serving

Name of film: *The Time Machine*

Date film was first shown: 2002

Date reviewed: January 25, 2019

Rating: 4 out of 10

This is the third major Hollywood treatment of H.G. Wells book, *The Time Machine*, with the others in 1978 and 1960. The part about him, the protagonist (Dr. Alexander Hartdegen) inventing and building the time machine is interesting. However, his focus is not on making the world a better place but on his own self-serving goal to save his would-be wife Emma (played by Sienna Guillory) from death. After he realizes that fails, he travels into the farther future, encountering a horrifying world, one eventually destroyed by a moon breaking apart. He encounters the Eloi, which are rightly shown as dark-skinned people rather than White folks like in the 1978 film. Unfortunately this film, increasingly becoming an action flick at the end, apart from the message that you can't change the past, has no takeaway at the end. The male protagonist remains in the future and his memory lives on in the past. Unlike the 1978 movie, this does not have a political message or a protagonist who cares about someone other than himself (or his love interest, an Eloi named Mara, played by Samantha Mumba). While I liked the intellectual nature of the protagonist and the library as a place of knowledge, this movie is lacking in many respects, apart from unnecessarily weird mollacks. I would not watch it again or recommend it to anyone.

There's much more to say about this film, however. Despite the fact that this film has obvious negatives, it does have a strong theme, at least through part of it, about preservation of knowledge overtime. Hartdegen is an intellectual milieu of sorts but his ideas of time travel are rejected as hair-brained, a bit like Henry Frankenstein's ideas of animating flesh of dead humans again was seen by the university he worked with as the passion of a "madman," leading him to go out on his own. In terms of the preservation of knowledge, the librarian unit, Vox 114, embodies what we can think of the future storage of knowledge, and yet, even in the far future it still exists as a place of knowledge and understanding, a bit like an archives of sorts. So, that part of the film is interesting to say the least.

I can't remember good acting by anyone specifically. I can't compare this film to the 1960 film, *The Time Machine*, by George Pal, but I can say this film was generally horrible for the reasons I have already explicated. With that, my review of this film comes to a close, a film that definitely should be rated a 4 out of 10.

The Time Traveler's Wife: An interesting take on time travel

Name of film: *The Time Traveler's Wife*

Date film was first shown: 2009

Date reviewed: February 12, 2019

Rating: 8 out of 10

I have been watching a number of science fiction movies and this movie was relatively interesting. Basically time travel is portrayed as something that is unstable rather than something that can be controlled like in *The Time Machine*, like Adam Sandler in *Click* until the "auto mode" takes over, or like the future that Amy Adams character can see in *Arrival*. The main character is a research librarian who meets a woman who becomes his wife although he doesn't know her, but he has time traveled to visit her when she was younger. Unlike my other reviews, I see no point to give any spoilers here. I will say the movie is a unique take on time travel unlike other science fiction movies which feature this element. There really are no people of color in this film but that shouldn't surprise anyone at all.

But there is much more which can be said about this film. Apart from the acting of Eric Bana as a Chicago librarian named Henry DeTamble, and Rachel McAdams as an artist named Clare Abshire, this is a typical romantic drama which can easily be called "melodramatic." Even so, I would say that movie itself still is a compelling story, although in a typical Hollyweird style perhaps. I would say this movie differs in that it isn't necessarily a "happy ending" in that Bana's character is shot accidentally by Clare's hunting father (perhaps playing into the stereotype of the "hick" whom is a hunter) and ultimately dies, but that makes it all the better. In some ways, this movie reminds me a bit of the 1980 film, *Somewhere in Time*, but that film is different in that his time travel is an act of self-hypnosis.

With that, my review of this film comes to a close and I think it deserves a rating of 8 out of 10.

Arrival: Thoughtful, unlike other Alien-Human Contact Films

Name of film: *Arrival*

Date film was first shown: 2016

Date reviewed: February 12, 2019

Rating: 10 out of 10

Note: This combines the first review of the film I wrote (see paragraph 4), and the second review of the film to make a composite review.

I have been watching a number of similar films recently, from 'Contact' to 'Close Encounters of the Third Kind.' This movie is different. It is not a white person's fantasy as much as the others but is more of a movie about how the aliens think, about language, about the change of time (past, present, and future). I remember being blown away when I first saw it back in 2016 and I still feel that affect. Amy Adams leads the movie as the protagonist while Ryan Reynolds is a good supporting character. The aliens are not like those in *Close Encounters* or those in *War of the Worlds*, but rather they have a mission to unite humanity together, something which the character played by Amy Adams (Louise) helps to push along. The movie is still strong and a good piece of science fiction...that really makes you think.

I do have one question however: if Louise can see in the future can she not see her own death? If so, that would be deeply disturbing. Perhaps the movie purposely did not go to that place.

Sure humanity is together at the end but at what cost? There is martial law in the streets of the US and constant looting, mass suicide by a religious cult, and unrest across the world. Yet this somehow barely affects them in Montana (or anywhere in the world)...why? Do we really need a group of elites to save humanity? Can't humans save themselves? That is what is concerning about this movie. Additionally the military is handling this operation and has somehow not engaged in a use of force yet? Come on. Why would the alien land in the US? That is the last place they would want to go.

This movie really blew me away. Amy Adams' performance and her ability to smash down barriers put before her, in terms of things the military didn't want her to do, was powerful. She really carried the movie. These aliens are unlike any in other movies I have seen. How? They came to Earth in order to unite humanity and they believe that time is cyclical, not a straight line. This was great as it broke down the common stereotype of aliens, saying that if we communicate together, work together, we can get more than fighting. Also, I liked the dig at the person watching a Rush Limbaugh type character who I think is killed by the aliens or something, if I remember right, who totally deserves it.

Still, I would definitely watch this movie again as it clearly has powerful themes without a doubt. That is all.

Close Encounters of the Third Kind: Riveting movie about human-alien contact

Name of film: *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*

Date film was first shown: 1977

Date reviewed: February 11, 2019

Rating: 10 out of 10

Tonight I watched this movie and was surprised how good it was. It is suspenseful and pulls you in. Richard Dreyfuss and Melanie Dawson pull this movie through. Dreyfuss's character goes from an ordinary working-class slob to seeming to be totally out of his mind...that it drives his wife off the edge

psychologically, causing her to leave with their children. From her perspective it is perfectly rational to see Dreyfuss's character as totally bonkers.

These aliens encounter with people but they do not harm them or even attempt to do so. Instead, they communicate with a set of symbols, with some parallels to 'Arrival' in 2012. Eventually Dreyfuss, Dawson, and another make it to where the aliens are, notes are played and that is that, with an encounter between all the races. What does this necessitate however? Well, for one the government literally makes up a phony threat to cause people to evacuate 300 miles around the site and uses military power to enforce the evacuation. Secondly, Dawson's child is literally abducted for no apparent reason. Thirdly, memories/visions are implanted in the heads of those who encounter with the aliens.

At the same time, there is a whole set of people taken away in a helicopter for not being helpful so they miss the encounter. Additionally, the third member of those climbing the mountain is hit with sleeping drug, so he misses the encounter.

With all that being said the movie is still overall a positive, better than other alien movies. While it is primarily a story of White people, it has much more diversity than that Zemeckis film, *Contact*. This film in particular inspired an episode of Futurama and has no distorted ideas like that Zemeckis film.

All in all, this is a riveting movie and I wouldn't mind watching it in the future.

Turn Back the Clock: One of the best time travel movies ever made

Name of film: *Turn Back the Clock*

Date film was first shown: 1933

Date reviewed: February 23, 2019

Rating: 10 out of 10

After watching *Somewhere in Time* (1980) earlier this afternoon, I'd have to say this movie outshines that movie. Not only does this movie not use the same outdated Hollyweird motif of the man

"getting the girl" and living happily ever after, as is partially implied by *Somewhere in Time*, but it has a stronger social criticism. The main character, in this pre-Hays Code movie, Joe Gimlet (played by Lee Tracy), is an owner of a small drugstore, literally petty bourgeoisie but he has aspirations to become rich like his childhood friend Ted Wright (played by Otto Kruger) after a dispute with his wife to Mary (played by Mae Clarke) to invest their \$4,000 in savings.

Then in a drunken rambling he is hit by a car and is transported 20 years into the past, seemingly to 1913, meaning he knows all the events up to March 6, 1933, the day he began his time traveling. Of course like other time travel movies, like *Somewhere in Time*, *Girl Who Leaps Through Time*, and *The Time Machine*, he uses this time travel for his own benefit, to become very rich, literally a bourgeois figure who knows the future. This leads him to marry Elvina (played by Patty Simmons), whom he has a rocky relationship in part because she cheats on him, and get appointed to the War Production Board, from which President Woodrow Wilson fires him for his "erratic behavior." In the process he realizes that money cannot buy him happiness and he becomes a victim of his own success with the police going after him for his bank's misdeeds on March 6, 1933. He then wakes up and it turns out to be all a dream as is in the hospital and had hit his head, grateful for what he has. In this way, the film is a bit like Frank Capra films in that it is critical of the rich and sorta stands up for the "common man," making it better than other time travel movies.

All in all, I found this movie enjoyable and I would definitely watch it again if I have the chance.

***Twelve Monkeys*: Has some promise but still lackluster**

Name of film: *Twelve Monkeys*

Date film was first shown: 1995

Date reviewed: March 9, 2019

Rating: 8 out of 10

Tonight I watched this 1995 Terry Gilliam sci-fi film, which stars Bruce Willis who plays James Cole, Madeleine Stowe whom plays a psychiatrist named Kathryn Raily, Brad Pitt as Jeffrey Goines, and Christopher Plummer as Dr. Leland Goines, to name the main characters. Cole, a prisoner in a compound in Philadelphia in 2035, living underground like the rest of humanity which was not killed by a virus. He is tasked by a group of scientists of traveling back in time to find the origin of a virus which is traced to a group called the 12 Monkeys.

The first time he travels back is to 1990 (due to scientist error), but he is confined to a mental hospital in Baltimore, meeting Kathryn Raily, and Jeffrey Goines. Not obtaining the information needed, he is whisked back to his present (our future), scolded for not obtaining what is necessary. So he gets a second chance, accidentally traveling to a WWI battlefield in 1917, then traveling to 1996. When there he literally kidnaps Kathryn, and they drive to Philadelphia to find more information about the 12 Monkeys. He then convinces the scientists to let him travel to 1996 again, in part because he wants be with Kathryn, whom has become fond of him. While there he wants to turn himself into the police but Kathryn doesn't let him. He then takes out his teeth to stop the scientists from tracking him. Soon Kathryn buys wigs and disguises for each of them, with them looking like the recurring dream he has.

On the way to the airport to take a plane to Key West, it is clear the the 12 Monkeys are just "wannabe revolutionaries" as he calls it. Instead they want to release animals from cages, Dr. Peters (played by David Morse) is clearly the one who releases the virus to the world. Cole tells this to the scientists of the present (our future) and is given a gun by his fellow prisoner to shoot someone, although it is not clear whom. But as he runs to kill the renegade doctor he is shot by police and fire in the arms of Kathryn. Watching this unfold is apparently a young James who witnesses perversely, the scene of his own death. With that and the virus spreading across the world, the film ends, sitting near a scientist of the future (Cole's present), Jones.

This raises so, so many questions. For one, are the scientists of the future/present complicit in the spread of the virus. If so, that is deeply disturbing. Additionally, while I would say that it is extremely probable he traveled to the past, 80-90% probability this was the case. However, there is a 10-20% chance his "time travel" experience was actually just a cruel experiment by scientists. In the end, I think other time travel movies I watched were much better but I would rate this a 8 out of 10 as it has some promise, although it is a bit depressing as it implies that the future is already written and cannot be changed, a bit like the conception in *The Time Traveler's Wife* (2009).

***Multiplicity*: Interesting concept but not a strong movie**

Name of film: *Multiplicity*

Date film was first shown: 1996

Date reviewed: January 24, 2019

Rating: 7 out of 10

The plot of this movie is simple: the major male protagonist, Doug Kinney (played by Michael Keaton) is able to clone himself three times, to make Lance, Rico, and Lenny, so he can take care of all his tasks, allowing him to effectively deal with "annoying" household chores and move up the work hierarchy, after being introduced to this cloning by Dr. Leeds (played by Harris Yulin). Of course, this means that he only uses these people for his own benefit but not constructively, leading to complications with his wife, Laura (played by Andie MacDowell). In this way, the film is somewhat worth watching but mostly not, on the whole, granting it a rating of 7 out of 10.

But there's more to say about this movie. For one, it is a bit funny that Laura never figures out that Doug has three clones, even having sex with each of them! She even sees the clones in a car next to her at the end of the film but believes she is hallucinating so she ignores it! I would also like to mention I watched this film mainly because it was parodied in Treehouse of Horror XIII, which is Season 14, episode 1 of *The Simpsons*, the segment "send in the clones," which was aired five months

after *Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones* was first shown, which is likely not a coincidence. In that segment, Homer's new cursed hammock produces clones of those whom rest on it, with the clones (whom have no bellybutton) doing all his chores and ending up being dumber than him, with Marge finding that the Homer she has is actually a clone with the real Homer dying due to his obsession of over donuts but she soon gets over this trauma.

Otherwise, I don't have anything else to say about this comedic film, meaning that this review has come to an end.

The Terminator: White masculinity and a shoot 'em up

Name of film: *The Terminator*

Date film was first shown: 1984

Date reviewed: January 24, 2019

Rating: 1 out of 10

Like the second movie, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, this one also has little value. Some may revere it culturally but they are clearly mistaken. It is a violent movie which showcases murder and White masculinity. I would never recommend this piece of trash to anyone.

There's much more than this short paragraph to describe this film, however. This science fiction film, directed by James Cameron, has become a classic despite what I have previously stated. The horrid violence of this film is not the worst part, but rather than even the time travel to the past is not very interesting either. Other movies have much better forms of time travel than this film. You could say that film is, like the *New York Times* said when it was first released, "B-movie with flair," or like the *Pittsburgh Press* and say it has "artsy ugliness." Both of those views have validity. I would add that this film pushed Arnold Schwarzenegger further to stardom and is one of the films is most known for, not surprisingly.

Otherwise, I don't think it is worth reviewing this film any further as I'd rather review more worthwhile films, with this film definitely deserving a rating of 1 out of 10, one of the lowest ratings I have ever given a movie.

Terminator 2: Judgement Day: Another annoying Hollyweird shoot 'em up

Name of film: *The Terminator 2: Judgment Day*

Date film was first shown: 1984

Date reviewed: January 24, 2019

Rating: 1 out of 10

Sometime ago I watched this movie to see what the hype was all about. Clearly it was overblown. This movie is a typical Hollywood shoot 'em up, nothing special. I would never ever watch this movie again or recommend it to anyone. If I could rate it lower than 1 star I would. Movies like this add no value.

There's still something more to say about this film, however. Again, this film, like the first one in the series, in 1984, was directed by James Cameron. Not surprisingly, it received critical acclaim, making this review within the minority of those whom disliked this film. Perhaps what I dislike about this film is the grotesque, unrelenting violence by the protagonist, played by Arnold Schwarzenegger. Otherwise I don't have much else to say about this film.

With that, this film clearly deserves a rating of 1 out of 10.

Cosmopolis: A strange, bizarre movie

Name of film: *Cosmopolis*

Date film was first shown: 2012

Date reviewed: January 19, 2019

Rating: 3 out of 10

This movie is clearly very strange and almost surreal. If you are looking for a criticism of wealth and class destruction, like in other films, this film will not provide that in the slightest. Despite

the fact that it has been some time since I have watched this film, I'll do my best to rate this film which generally received positive reviews at the time it came out.

Much of the film takes place in a limousine office, with Robert Pattinson playing Eric Packer, and his reckless trading leads to his wife, Elise, leaves him. He encounters anti-capitalist activists whom wave rats and worry about the spectre of capitalism, while Eric learns there is a person out to kill him, Benno Levin (played by Paul Giamatti) whom he directly confronts. I can't remember much more of the film than that, so I'll cut my review short with that.

In the end, this film, due to its problems, deserves a rating of 3 out of 10.

Spy Kids 4-D: All the Time in the World: Ok action movie, but not a comedy

Name of film: *Spy Kids 4-D: All the Time in the World*

Date film was first shown: 2011

Date reviewed: January 14, 2019

Rating: 5 out of 10

After watching the first three movies in the Spy Kids franchise I was interested to see this movie. After seeing that people had rated it poorly as noted on the movie's Wikipedia page, I was ready for a movie that would not be that great.

This movie does not focus on Carmen and Juni but rather the stepmother and father of Carmen's children. The concept of the Timekeeper is interesting as it is similar to the villain in the 1990s Inspector Gadget movie in that he wants to stop time.

Positives:

1. Villain is humanized in that you can empathize with him and his goal (to spend more time with his father), although you don't realize his ultimate goal until the movie's last 20 minutes. This is similar to the other movies where the villain either turns against his invention (Spy Kids 1) but different from the villain who wants to rule the world (Spy Kids 2), or wants revenge on the world for locking him in cyberspace (Spy Kids 3)

2. The gadgets used by the two new Spy Kids have cool effects
3. A good family movie I guess in that the mother and father are relatable, although the father is so clueless that he doesn't know he has been married to a spy for 2 years even though he is the "spy hunter" (a person who tracks spies) who is fired from his job later on in the movie

Negatives:

1. An annoying talking dog, making me think I am watching Family Guy. While the dog helps in the first half of the movie, by the second half he just sits around and does nothing. Why?
2. Bad or non-existent jokes. This movie is supposed to be a comedy but isn't funny
3. While the two new spy kids work together, they are more annoying than Juni and Carmen by a long shot

There is probably more but I think this movie does not have the spark of the previous ones. It probably shouldn't have been made at all. The action and excitement of the other movies is not here, even *Spy Kids 3*, and the OSS seems more incompetent than ever. *Spy Kids 3* should have been the end of this franchise (as was originally planned), not this movie.

The first collective review of the *Star Wars* movies: is it fascist?

Name of films: *A New Hope* (1977), *Empire Strikes Back* (1980), *Return of the Jedi* (1983), *The Phantom Menace* (1999), *Attack of the Clones* (2002), and *Revenge of the Sith* (2005)

Date reviewed: February 13, 2016

Taken from post on the Leftist Critic blog titled "[Is Star Wars fascist?](#)", focusing on my responses rather than the person I am responding to, with footnotes removed. Please see the post linked if you wish to read the whole thing, with Gutteridge's quotes and all, leading this review to be a little choopy.

...I even saw two of the movies in the 2000s (Episode 2 and 3) in a local movie theater which had a huge screen, one of the last of its kind. That always made an impression on me when I watched

the movies from time to time. As of now, I'm just a moderate fan but I wouldn't buy any merchandise, toys or such from the Star Wars franchise. There's no need.

I haven't seen Star Trek but I can say something about Jar Jar Binks. I think that Lucas did stick him in his movies as a sort of comic relief. However, I do think there is a racial stereotype in place, almost like his a modern version of [Stepin Fetchit](#). Even if one countered this this stereotype, Binks is a horrid character in general who acts like a goof and is extremely mindless. But perhaps that is the point. I'm not sure what the racial message is there, or with the [greedy Neimodians](#) of the Trade Federation who could represent an Asian stereotype. As one writer [points out](#), "*Star Wars: The Phantom Menace* clearly invokes imagery and audio from racist ethnic stereotypes. The fact that the recipient of these stereotypical characteristics are non-human aliens does not change this fact." As a personal admission I'd need to know a bit more about racial stereotypes to see if this is the reality. Still, I think this a valid concern.

The six Star Wars movies are white and male-dominated with female characters mostly pushed to secondary roles (except for Princess Leia and Padme Amidala) and male characters are put in the primary role. Literally there are only two black characters I can think of: Mace Windu, who gets pushed out a window in Episode 3, and [Lando Calrissian](#), a black capitalist/racketeer who betrays the Rebels to the Empire in Episode 5 then turns around and "good" in Episode 6. Not a good track record. Yes, the most recent Star Wars movie does have a black main character, Finn, and a female lead character, Rey, but this doesn't change the nature of the previous six movies in terms of racial and gender diversity.

Leia is only part of the rebellion, she isn't necessarily leading it. As for Amidala, she is controlling a planet, Naboo, that likely embodies what some have called "capitalist peace" since it was, [according to Wookieepedia](#), "considered a world of classical beauty due to the aesthetics of its population centers" and was "peaceful." As a result, I don't know if I'd consider the Galactic Republic, of which Amidala was part of, to be leftist in the radical sense. After all, as [it is described](#), it sounds

kinda elitist but a little like the Amerikan federal system, which could be endorsed by today's liberals and conservatives: "The Galactic Republic, commonly referred to simply as the Republic, and later also known as the Old Republic, was the [democratic](#) union that governed [the galaxy](#) for a thousand [years](#) prior to the rise of the [Galactic Empire](#). The Republic was aided by the efforts of the [Jedi Order](#), who stood as the guardians of peace and justice, enabling the Republic to be free of full-scale conflict for over a thousand years."

...The reason about this, is that in Episode 3, that evil Palpatine/Sidious who killed most of the elitist force, the Jedi in what was basically a "surprise" [extermination campaign](#), took power and [created the Galactic Empire](#), a day referred to as "[Empire Day](#)" in other series. Palpatine in that movie declares that "In order to ensure the security and continuing stability, the Republic will be reorganized into the first Galactic Empire, for a safe and secure society." That doesn't sound very democratic to me. After all, Wookieepedia [notes](#) that this Empire replaced the republic, with authority going to the Emperor:

"The Galactic Empire...was the government that rose to power in the aftermath of the Clone Wars, replacing the Galactic Republic. Central authority was given to Darth Sidious, publicly known as Emperor Palpatine, who was also the Dark Lord of the Sith. For nearly two decades, the legislative body was the Imperial Senate, but it was dissolved by the Emperor shortly before the Battle of Yavin. During the reign of the Empire, countless star systems were conquered and dissident actions ruthlessly stamped out by the rapidly expanding Imperial Army and Navy. The Empire also oversaw the near extermination of the Jedi, with the destruction of the Jedi Temple on Coruscant and its renovation into the newly named Imperial Palace."

I know one could say this is a Star Wars wikia and it will be biased. However, what this says makes it obvious that the Empire was a dictatorial regime. Also in Episode 4, the Imperial Senate was DISSOLVED. The legislative body was a joke, as noted in the following passage from [this article](#):

"...By its fourteenth year of existence, the new Senate had started growing weaker as the Emperor's planetary governors assumed more responsibility over their territories. However, the Emperor preserved the Senate in order to make the Empire's member worlds believe that they still had a part to play in government. Secretly, he planned to disband the Senate from the start but he needed it to preserve order until the Death Star was completed."

So, I just don't buy the idea that Empire was a democracy. That goes against the events in the Star Wars animated series and the movies (4, 5, 6) in general. The same goes for the First Order in the new movie which [is described](#) as a military junta that was inspired by the Galactic Empire, led by a Supreme Leader and his right-hand man, Kylo Ren who "would oversee the colonization of the Unknown Regions and destruction of the last Jedi" but lacked an official capital.

So back to Gutteridge. He writes that "we're cheering a bunch of monarchists fighting a democracy? How'd that happen?" then tweets comparisons between the Rebel Alliance, which was a "[military resistance government](#)" just like [the Resistance](#). So, in that way the Rebel Alliance are right-wing one could argue. However, one could say they are a resistance force to the empire, almost a guerrilla movement, and don't really constitute a state like the Empire or the First Order which has, as Max Weber notes about all states, "monopoly on the use of force." But I'll address this later on.

You could say that and perhaps the rebellion is made up of middle-class folks. By this description Luke would be part of the petty bourgeoisie since he could be arguably part of a strata that "rely entirely on the sale of their labor-power for survival...and thus can buy the labor-power of the proletariat [the droids in this case] and lumpenproletariat to work the means of production." At the same time the Rebellion could arguably include lumpenproletariat people like gangster Han Solo and his companion Chewbacca. But I agree its not a rebellion of the proletariat in a Marxian or radical sense. That can even be said [about the group of rebels](#) in the new animated series Star Wars Rebels in one sense or another.

Now onto the other claims. According to Wookieepedia, the Rebel Alliance had their origins in [a group of Senators](#) who "were vocal opponents of Palpatine's reforms" and was "found itself increasingly at odds with the Chancellor's increasing executive powers, and often had trouble gaining an audience with him." Two of the individuals were key in what became the Rebel Alliance. Jumping ahead, another page [notes](#) that this rebellion had a mission to restore "liberty" to the galaxy, at least initially and eventual [establishment of a Republic](#) like the Galactic Republic in Episodes 1, 2, and 3. Another part of the same page notes that the Rebel Alliance [constituted of](#) a government and a military command led by the Chief of State who was led an "elected dictatorship, [since] the Chief of State had virtually unlimited power over the Alliance" and was taken out of power after the Emperor died. Other parts of the Rebel government included an Advisory Council comprises of representatives from "seven Alliance governments who had given the most lives in battle to defeating the Empire" and it was "responsible for approving or disapproving the proposals of the Chief of State." There was also an alliance cabinet which allowed the Chief of State to "maintain and run the Alliance," Alliance Allied Commands, or the "the individual governments of worlds, organizations, and groups that were members of the Alliance" and then the military which was [led by the Chief of State](#). In this way, the Rebel Alliance can be considered a state but also a guerrilla movement at the same time. Undoubtedly it can be considered right-wing but so can the Empire.

... Naboo definitely had what one could call an elected monarchy... I can remember some scene in a Clone Wars episode when a clone [calls the Jedi slavemasters](#) literally: "As they present Slick before the Jedi, Slick snaps that his brothers are enslaved by the Jedi, that he was striking a blow for all clones and that he loves his brothers, but Cody and Rex retort that he has now exposed them all to certain doom. Cody orders the other clones to take the traitor to lockup."

...I can remember people in the animated series saying there's a hypocrisy for "defenders of the peace" (Jedi) to be warriors. This part from [the Episode 3 screenplay](#) is also relevant here:

MACE WINDU: I sense a plot to destroy the Jedi. The dark side of the Force surrounds the Chancellor.

KI-ADI-MUNDI: If he does not give up his emergency powers after the destruction of Grievous, then he should be removed from office.

MACE WINDU: That could be a dangerous move ... the Jedi Council would have to take control of the Senate in order to secure a peaceful transition . . .

KI-ADI-MUNDI: . . . and replace the Congress with Senators who are not filled with greed and corruption.

YODA: To a dark place this line of thought will carry us. Hmmmmmm. . . . great care we must take.

Seriously they want a coup in a republic, arguably a bourgeois democracy. Yikes! This really would make them theocrats and actually kinda philosopher kings too in a sense. However, without this they are neither of these labels.

However, they were basically treated as elite warriors who would defend the Republic. But in some sense you could say they are religious leaders. They aren't really like the evangelical movement in the US. Here's a relevant passage from [the Episode 4 screenplay](#) which sounds almost like the Force is a religion in a sense:

HAN: Hokey religions and ancient weapons are no match for a good blaster at your side, kid.

LUKE: You don't believe in the Force, do you?

HAN: Kid, I've flown from one side of this galaxy to the other. I've seen a lot of strange stuff, but I've never seen anything to make me believe there's one all-powerful force controlling everything. There's no mystical energy field that controls my destiny.

Ben smiles quietly.

HAN: It's all a lot of simple tricks and nonsense.

BEN: I suggest you try it again, Luke.

I wouldn't say the Jedi started the war. I think Darth Sidious wanted the invasion of Naboo. Even if the Jedi "ambassadors" hadn't been there, showing their high status, then the invasion and blockade of Naboo would have included. But, yes in a sense we are cheering for right-wingers/rightists. However, there is a bourgeois democracy in the form of the Galactic Republic which sorta seems like the US in some way or another. This "democracy" as it will, which Marx and Engels called "dictatorship of the bourgeoisie," mirrors the dictatorship that ruled Mexico with an iron fist from the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1920 until the 1990s which constituted a corporatist political structure led by the PRI and had the legislature as merely a rubber-stamp.

... the Jedi do offer something in return. They help clear the hangar with the help of the Queen and her forces so that Naboo starfighters can destroy the Trade Federation ship of which Anakin succeeds in but by accident. Anyway, it is true they rescue a human white girl (the Queen). At the same time, the Gungans fight a robot army but are quickly surrounded and have to surrender, so I don't think it accurate to say that they are slaughtered by Aztecs as that almost implies that the movie condemns imperialism which it obviously does not.

... I guess you could say that but I think the Gungans are willing to side with the humans ("the Naboo") because they see their planet under attack by a foreign force (a robot army led by the Trade Federation)... I don't think that is necessarily racial supremacy. I guess it could be considered genetic supremacy but not racial supremacy necessarily. This is because Jedi do NOT have to be humans to be Jedi. But I will agree it is strange. In fact, as they note in the movies, EVERYONE has midi-chlorians to some extent. As Qui-Gon [said in Episode 1](#) to a young Anakin, who was literally a slave, but freed:

Midi-chlorians are a microscopic lifeform that reside within all living cells and communicates with the Force. [they are] In your cells. We are symbionts with the midi-chlorians [or] Life forms living together for mutual advantage. Without the midi-chlorians, life could not exist, and we would have no knowledge of the Force. They continually speak to you, telling you the will of the Force. When you learn to quiet your mind, you will hear them speaking to you.

So, I don't think this constitutes racial supremacy akin to the Nazis. In fact, this kinda just says "the Force" comes from within you, but doesn't have to do with if you have "the right blood." One could argue this means it constitutes eugenics, but I don't agree.

... I don't think they [the Jedi] are fascists. Sure, you could argue convincingly they are theocrats, though I don't agree with that viewpoint, but since the part of the movie about midi-chlorians was wrongly interpreted, this undermines that they are fascists. However, I see the Jedi and the Sith, who are basically conflicting sects of "The Force" religion, as religious warriors, not necessarily as totally [theocrats](#) since they don't completely rule or govern "as a representative of God or a deity, or is a member of the ruling group in a theocracy, as a divine king or a high priest." Remember there's still the Senate and the Chancellor. True, these warriors are rogue, but I'm not sure if they can be considered totally part of a "ruling group."

Well, the Rebels are rightists but aren't necessarily "authoritarian assholes." Also by this time most of the Jedi in the galaxy are killed so they aren't leading the Rebellion.

Well it could be considered ludicrous except I think the Empire was over-confident and the Ewoks helped the Rebels turn the tide of victory. So its sorta unbelievable but this is fiction. What do you expect? You could say the same about the destruction of the Starkiller Base in the newest Star Wars movie. Additionally, it is possible for the best troops to be beat by troops that aren't the best. Its happened in world history before in military battles. It is possible.

Well, they couldn't defend it [Endor?] because of the Ewoks who were able to destroy much of the Empire's technology in their guerrilla tactics. Also, they only sent a legion of troopers down to Endor, and the Rebels had fought the Empire for years, so I'd imagine there were seasoned enough troops who knew how to fight the empire. Also, what's so bad with a "primitive" force defeating a "modern," technologically-advanced force? It happened in Avatar, a movie which had issues considering the white male savior of indigenous people, so it can happen here most definitely.

... Luke and his sister were NEVER in charge, they were just part of a broader rebellion. Sure, Leia was arguably more part of the ruling class, but she wasn't directly in charge of the Rebels and Luke most definitely was not, but basically was just like a high-ranking officer in the military. Also, Vader (whose full name [could mean](#) "dark father" but it is contested) was never in charge, that was the Emperor. I do think this part of episode 4 is relevant here:

HAN: It is for me, sister! Look, I ain't in this for your revolution, and I'm not in it for you,

Princess. I expect to be well paid. I'm in it for the money!

LEIA: You needn't worry about your reward. If money is all that you love, then that's what you'll receive!

Later Han becomes a loyal footsoldier of the Rebellion, but this still relevant here.

Yoda was never the head of the "official state religion." The Force can be argued as a religious force or feeling but was NOT the official religion of either the Empire, the Rebellion, First Order, or Resistance. Hence, there was no "theocratic dictatorship." However, there is a convincing argument that two rightist forces were fighting each other.

Luke Skywalker never did that. He never was really in a leading position of power. It is true he was a valued footsoldier of the Rebellion, but he was NOT the leader of the Alliance.

...Hence, Palpatine was more like a religious leader who masqueraded as a political leader than the latter. He is almost more a theocrat than the Jedi since he holds a leading position in government while the Jedi don't technically hold such a position but just kinda do their own thing, which has some consequences (good and bad). Also, Palpatine was trying to kill the Jedi warrior. Yes, Anakin was trying to call for a trial, but Windu's point that he is "too dangerous to stay alive" if I remember the words right, is valid. In my thinking Palpatine knew something like this would happen, so he made it so the Jedi would say he should die and then Anakin would come to Palpatine's aid. Also, Anakin is a bit selfish and out for himself, so he can't be painted as the "good" guy here. Anyway, here's [the relevant](#)

[passage](#) showing that Anakin is painted an agent of evil for good reason, even though he advocated a right for trial of Palpatine even as the courts are corrupt (bolding is my emphasis):

ANAKIN lands his speeder, jumps out, and runs down a long corridor toward the Chancellor's office.

In the heat of battle, MACE cuts the window behind the Chancellor's desk, and it crashes away.

MACE is forced out onto the ledge, which is twenty stories up. They fight over the precipice.

ANAKIN arrives to see PALPATINE and MACE fighting.

They stop as MACE forces PALPATINE to drop his sword. PALPATINE and MACE start yelling at each other.

MACE WINDU: You are **under arrest**, My Lord.

PALPATINE: Anakin! I told you it would come to this. I was right. The Jedi are taking over.

MACE WINDU: You old fool. **The oppression of the Sith** will never return. Your plot to regain control of the Republic is over . . . you have lost . . .

PALPATINE: No! No! **You will die!**

PALPATINE raises his hands, and lightning bolts shoot out. They are blocked by MACE's lightsaber. PALPATINE is pushed back against the window sill.

PALPATINE: He is a traitor, Anakin.

MACE WINDU: He's the traitor. Stop him!

PALPATINE: Come to your senses, boy. **The Jedi are in revolt**. They will betray you, just as they betrayed me.

MACE WINDU: Aarrrrggghhhhh . . .

PALPATINE: You are not one of them, Anakin. Don't let him kill me.

MACE WINDU: Aarrrrggghhhhh . . .

PALPATINE: **I am your pathway to power**. I have the power to save the one you love. You must choose. You must stop him.

MACE WINDU: Don't listen to him, Anakin.

PALPATINE: Help me! **Don't let him kill me.** I can't hold on any longer. Ahhhhhhh . . .
ahhhhhhh . . . ahhhhhhh . . .

MACE pushes PALPATINE out to the edge of the ledge. As the Jedi moves closer, the bolts from Palpatine's hands begin to arch back on him. The Chancellor's face begins to twist and distort. His eyes become yellow as he struggles to intensify his powers.

PALPATINE: I can't ... I give up. Help me. I am weak ... I am too weak. Don't kill me. I give up. I'm dying. I can't hold on any longer.

MACE WINDU: **You Sith disease. I am going to end this once and for all.**

ANAKIN: You can't kill him, Master. **He must stand trial.**

MACE WINDU: **He has too much control of the Senate and the Courts. He is too dangerous to be kept alive.**

PALPATINE: I'm too weak. Don't kill me. Please.

ANAKIN: **It is not the Jedi way . . .**

MACE raises his sword to kill the CHANCELLOR.

ANAKIN: (continuing) **He must live . . .**

PALPATINE: Please don't, please don't . . .

ANAKIN: **I need him . . .**

PALPATINE: Please don't . . .

ANAKIN: NO!!!

Just as MACE is about to slash PALPATINE, ANAKIN steps in and cuts off the Jedi's hand holding the lightsaber.

As MACE stares at ANAKIN in shock, PALPATINE springs to life.

The full force of Palpatine's powerful Bolts blasts MACE. He attempts to deflect them with his one good hand, but the force is too great. As blue rays engulf his body, he is flung out the

window and falls twenty stories to his death. No more screams. No more moans. PALPATINE lowers his arm.

PALPATINE: Power! Unlimited power!

His face has changed into a horrible mask of evil. ANAKIN looks on in horror. PALPATINE cackles.

ANAKIN: What have I done?

Hence, its not as simple as just "defending" the right to a trial. There's a bit more there.

Well, he doesn't completely distance himself. He still accepts The Force but just in a different form. In this way he is a religious warrior who will serve an authoritarian Empire and/or the Emperor. So, NO he is not "won over by democratic values." Don't you remember when he KILLS all those Jedi in the Jedi Temple [literally](#). Isn't that basically a religious massacre or what is called [a pogrom](#)? Come on now.

There never really was a state religion, hence there can't be a separation of church and state. No one was EVER forced to believe in The Force. It was almost like the Jedi were like high-level thinkers or philosopher kings to some extent, except that they didn't really have political power but had political prestige.

There definitely isn't democracy everywhere. The Republic at least had a Senate of some value. However, the Empire has a useless and mock-powerful Senate which is abolished in Episode 4. Of note is an episode of the new Star Wars animated series, Star Wars Rebels where Vader orders [the burning of a city](#) (Tarkintown) on one of the character's home planets, Lothal in order to spread fear. Then there was the massacre, which has a My Lai quality, of the town's inhabitants and the destruction [of the town](#) in the newest Star Wars movie as noted in [this screenplay](#):

Lor San Tekka moves sadly through the village as STORMTROOPERS wielding FLAME

THROWERS destroy structures. Surrendering Villagers are ROUNDED UP. Penned

ANIMALS panic...The Troopers and villagers in battle -- as one Trooper is HIT and goes down.

Another -- OUR TROOPER -- KNEELS to help. The hit trooper raises a torn, bloody glove -- his HUMAN HAND visible -- and MARKS OUR STORMTROOPER'S MASK WITH BLOOD just before he dies. Our Trooper, stands -- overwhelmed by the battle.

...yes, the end of Episode 4 could said the reminiscent of Nazi rallies, but this was convincingly more the case in the newest Star Wars movie with a rally of the First Order. Seriously, those First Order folks were fascists... There was NO "Skywalker regime." There was just two rightist forces fighting each other. Additionally, the Rebellion was almost a tent for those of different viewpoints. However, it is evident that neither of the forces fighting each other can be seen as truly part of the Left.

I'll agree that movie was horrible. I'm not sure if calling Lucas a hack is fair though even though I think he was broadly a conservative and wanted to reinforce "traditional" values coming from the 1950s from what I've read.

Considering the faulty interpretations elsewhere, this is just totally wrong. Yes, the six major movies have a conservative element and reinforces traditionalism along with arguably patriarchalism. The same could be said about the new movie, but there is some level of a corrective with a female lead character (Rey) and a black stormtrooper who refuses to commit a war crime, an equivalent of the My Lai massacre, named Finn. The same could be said about the new Star Wars Rebels series which has a number of female characters even know the cast is still male-dominated, and the second animated clone wars series, not necessarily the first one...

There are a number of historical analogies one could make in relation to the Star Wars series. Tom Engelhardt, [argued in one written piece](#) that George Lucas challenged the view that Americans shouldn't be reminded about the Vietnam war, "decontaminating war of its recent history through a series of inspired cinematic decisions that rescued crucial material from the wreckage of Vietnam." Engelhart continues by rightly pointing out that Lucas started the Star Wars series in its "own self-enclosed universe in deepest space and in an amorphous movie past...an era of civil war, an evil empire, rebels, an ultimate weapon, a struggle for freedom" and that "he uncoupled the audience from a

legacy of massacre and atrocity" with Skywalker's family suffering "its own My Lai," He writes that this allows the audience and Luke to "set off on an anti-imperial venture as the victimized, not as victimizers" and that later on, "Lucas's white teenage rebels would glide effortlessly among the natives. They would learn from value-superior Third World mystics...and be protected by ecological fuzzballs like the Ewoks." Engelhart writes that after the 1970s, "*Star Wars*-like themes also began to penetrate the world of adult entertainment" and this allowed G.I. Joe to be reintroduced along with other "action figures" to released as *Star Wars* knock offs.

While Englehart makes valid points, I think it important to recognize the different interpretations of *Star Wars* before putting forward my own analysis. Steven Belletto and Daniel Grausam argue that the film quickly undermines the reading that it is critical of the United States, saying that Episode IV's premise "associates the Rebels with Western settlers and heroes" and then populates the Empire "with soldiers and henchmen outfitted for a Stanlist regime." They further argue, on the same page, that the movie also puts forward the idea that the West is represented by "technologically inferior Rebels" rather than an invading war machine, which revives the narrative that "the South Vietnamese Army comprised the freedom fighters" and that the North Vietnamese were "agents of a monolithic, evil, Communist empire set on world domination." In writing about Episode 5, Belletto and Grausam argue that the movie is just "dumbed down Emerson" and claiming that Yoda has a resemblance to Reagan. They argue that for Episode 6, Luke is an "optimistic Reaganite" who continues to underestimate the power of the Dark Side, that the Rebels aren't for freedom from the Empire's grasp but they want to supplant it as the governing force of the galaxy. They later write that there is the triumph of the Rebels in episode 6 means that class distinctions are dissolved, with nobility, who they describe as Luke and Leia, along with Ewok and Wookies participating, meaning that, in their interpretation, "the Eastern establishment and European aristocracy acknowledge their appreciation for the lone ranger, just as he acknowledges his commitment to their benevolent monarchy." Belletto and Grausum also write that three patriarchs, redeemed Vader, Yoda and Obi-Wan, in their interpretation,

return in Episode 6 at the end "to celebrate this marriage of Western adventurism [symbolized by Han Solo] and Eastern monarchy that confirm the union's implicit hierarchy as part of the natural order." Then, there's Stephen McVeigh who looks at what the engine that drives the Star Wars narrative. He argues that the original trilogy (episodes 4-6) constitutes "a post-Vietnam critique of military superiority whereby a technological superpower is defeated by smaller, more humanized forces" and that the films present "a dual reading of U.S. military might" as either a "morally bankrupt oppressor" or that U.S. interests and actions are just. He also argues that while some critics tend to argue that the Soviet Union or Nazi Germany is represented by the Empire, that "the dark truth at the core of Lucas's evil Empire is that it presents a version of America itself" and that the Star Wars movies are more than about posturing of Cold War superpowers, and by recognizing "that the rebels and Empire are one and the same side" only does Lucas's mission come to the surface. He goes on beyond this, but this alone is worth mentioning.

It is worth mentioning, last but not least that there is a group of writers that assert that Star Wars is related to Vietnam, as Englehart alluded to. McVeigh writes that Star Wars Episode 4 has to be seen in light of the Vietnam War and that instead of detailing the horrors of Vietnam, he "decided to offer a balm...ramp [of] the mythic landscape that had been so badly traumatized by American involvement in the war in Southeast Asia." His mission, as the writers argue, is to repair "the damage done by the Vietnam War on the American people." McVeigh also writes than later also argue that Episode 1 fit into fears of U.S. culture (conspiracy and paranoia) and that the relevance of Star Wars to "stories that connect to become an account of passage of American self-concept through the aftermath of Vietnam" assures the series a "unique place within American popular culture." Other than McVeigh, Dan Rubey argues that Episode 4 uses "an image ourselves from the past," referring to dogfights during WWII which Lucas used as a basis for fights in the Star Wars movies, and that it has direct relation to Vietnam. He also writes that the film feeds on the feelings of the audience of frustration along with numerous desires (escape, mobility, and power) and satisfies them with a good/evil dichotomy,

numerous metaphors and endorse "traditional structures of racism, sexism and social hierarchy that have helped to create and maintain those frustrations." The same write also argues that Lucas has a "conservative ideological bias," that Star Wars is a "chivalric romance plot" that is about power of the Force which is gendered as male, that the Rebels are restorers of the old order, and that "Lucas dooms *Star Wars* to repeat all the ideological cliches of our society"

These assessments are validated in numerous ways by the franchise itself. In one Lucasfilm book titled *Star Wars and History*, Vietnam is mentioned 19 times. More directly are sections from J. W. Rinzle's *The Making of Star Wars* (Enhanced Edition). In the book, it says that George Lucas originally wanted to make *Apocalypse Now*, which is as any viewers know, a very antiwar and anti-Vietnam War film. As Rinzle writes in a section titled "Vietnam Wars in Space," "the Vietnam War was just too controversial" meaning that Lucas, who was apparently poor and in debt, turned to an unnamed science fiction project which became *Star Wars*. In the book, Rinzle quotes Lucas as saying he had "very strong feelings" about *Apocalypse Now*, implying that *Star Wars* was about the Vietnam War with political ideas he was going to put in that movie going into *Star Wars*. The most telling quote from Lucas which basically confirms that *Star Wars* is about reclaiming the Vietnam War (with "selective" concepts) is as follows:

A lot of my interest in Apocalypse Now was carried over into Star Wars. I figured that I couldn't make that film because it was about the Vietnam War, so I would essential deal with some of the same interesting concepts that I was going to use and convert them into space fantasy, so you'd have essentially a large technological empire going after a small group of freedom fighters or human beings.

I could go on and mention numerous other books that mention how *Star Wars* is a reflection on the Vietnam War. However, I think it best to give my other thoughts at this present time. The argument that the Rebels and the Empire are just two sides of the same coin, representing different elements of the United States, is relatively convincing. I was thinking about this today and if the Empire

represented the Soviet Union, the process of events doesn't make much sense. I say that because there was no major military defeat of the Soviet Union by the United States before the 1970s, which would be represented by the Death Star's explosion, and America was not defeated by the Soviet Union as they were by the Empire at the beginning of Episode 5. This would get even more confusing because the Empire was originally a Galactic Republic, which Russia was NOT before the Russian revolution of 1917. I also thought that maybe Episode 1 referred to WWI and that the Clone Wars referred to WWII but in terms of the events that happened in Star Wars, this doesn't make much sense either. Neither does the destruction of the Death Star refer to the Korean War or the battle of Hoth in episode 5 refer to the Bay of Pigs invasion (and disaster), as one could think.

Still, there are a number of important observations to make and I don't need to read the *Star Wars and Philosophy* book in order to assert them. Both forces, "good" and "evil," are arguably right-wing. The Galactic Republic in episodes 1-3 is basically a bourgeois democracy, the [Trade Federation](#) in episodes 1-3 which was "an interstellar shipping and trade conglomerate," while the CIS in episodes 2-3 is a confederacy led by a Sith lord. It is also possible that Lucas is condemning certain ideas since, as noted [in this Wookieepedia entry](#), the trade groups that supported the CIS's cause were nationalized by the Galactic Empire. As for the Rebels in episodes 4-6, they were, as noted earlier, an authoritarian government that aimed to bring back the bourgeois democracy of the Galactic Republic (of which they succeeded in Episode 6). Then, the Empire is obviously a fascist force which is authoritarian in nature as well. The same dynamic is the case in the newest Star Wars movie with the First Order as obviously fascist and after the New Republic, which representing the bourgeois democracy, is destroyed, the Resistance is just like the Rebels.

After reading through these different books on the subject, I am more critical than ever of the series. Still, I guess unlike Gutteridge and others, I guess I still have some hope in the Star Wars series and think that it has at least some value due to its deeply problematic aspects. But, this hope could obviously be shattered into many pieces, and that is why I look forward to your comments on this issue.

In the end, I plan to write another article on this topic but I hope that this is the beginning of a more critical approach to the Star Wars series which is lauded too often, especially after the recent movie.

The second collective review of the *Star Wars* movies: is it anti-fascist?

Name of films: *A New Hope* (1977), *Empire Strikes Back* (1980), *Return of the Jedi* (1983), *The Phantom Menace* (1999), *Attack of the Clones* (2002), and *Revenge of the Sith* (2005)

Date reviewed: December 14, 2016

Taken from post on the Leftist Critic blog titled "[Is Star Wars really anti-fascist?](#)" The introduction to the post is removed here, as the rest is basically a review. Footnotes are also removed.

There is undoubtedly public enthusiasm about Star Wars, but the connection to politics is nothing new, with some saying that Star Wars Episode II (2002) could be analogous to Bush's government, and some liberal critics casting Bush as [Darth Vader](#) and Cheney as [Chancellor Palpatine](#). But there are fundamental truths about the series, which will undoubtedly carry into the newest movie. For one, apart from weak character development in some movies, there is the creation of an "ideologically conservative future...[a] modern quest narrative" with [Princess Leia](#) in Episode 4 as a "damsel in distress" and the movies serving as a harbinger of "renowned American conservatism of the Reagan presidency" with the rebellion lead by "clean cut, well-spoken white youths." To add onto this, the [Rebel Alliance](#), while it is fighting against an "evil empire," is hierarchical, celebrating its victory (at the end of episode 4) in a scene that seems to echo, without a doubt, famed Nazi propagandist Leni Reifenstahl, with the white males "naturally" in positions of authority, with alien races downgraded while gender, class, and race relations are not challenged. This return to "traditional morality" is not an "adventurous quest-narrative" that was part of Hollywood's "revitalization" but it is a blockbuster which promotes nostalgia for the 1950s. If this isn't enough, the series, which has interwoven itself into familial relationships, and originally meant for children, moving family films back to the center of the global entertainment industry, while closing the "window for creative experimentation" in filmmaking that had supposedly begun in 1970.

There is much more to be said about Star Wars. Apart from the obvious nostalgia for the past, and in this case for past films of the Star Wars franchise, dominates the spectator with crowd-pleasing entertainment, with a sword-wielding "elite warrior cadre," the [Jedi](#), honored in film after film of the series. With the films being almost like a "myth of a fairytale," a cultural dream, which have situations like athletic contests where various characters engage in a story set in a mythological time, with a story of broad proportions, supports the idea of male dominance. There is no doubt symbolism in the movies with [Chewbacca](#) embodying a "wild man stereotype" some say, Christian imagery, a simplistic good vs. evil conflict, and some dreamlike locations like [Dagobah](#) in Episode 5.

But there is more than this. It seems that progressives and bourgeois liberals saying the movie could be anti-fascist, and by extension the whole series is anti-fascist. In theory this would be a feat for such a successful franchise, even mocked hilariously in Mel Brooks's *Spaceballs*, to be against fascism. However, that is too easy of a connection to make. There is no doubt that the [Empire](#) and [First Order](#) (the latter in 'The Force Awakens') are fascist and imperialist. The allusions are obvious. But what about the resistance? Well, in episodes 4, 5, 6, and 7, the Rebel Alliance, [New Republic](#), and [Resistance](#) are undoubtedly anti-imperial forces. However, they are not like the soldiers of Cuba who fought in Angola against the murderous US imperialists and South African racists, the Soviets who fought off the Nazi fascists, the Koreans who fought off the US imperialists, or the varying anti-colonial efforts against faltering European empires. These forces, and no doubt those in the new movie, might be anti-fascist, you could say, but they are not by extension anti-capitalist. This means that the Rebel Alliance, New Republic, and Resistance, along with rebels in animated series, are bourgeois liberal forces. So, nothing to cheer for.

To expand on this topic, the Rebel Alliance in episodes 4-6 has monarchist elements (Princess Leia), underworld elements ([Han Solo](#) and Chewbacca). This puts doubt on whether this organization is really anti-fascist. Any radical with any sense would decry monarchical rule as anti-democratic and call for something more representative, so to sympathize with the rebels is to support monarchy, glimmers

of fascism in an organization basically run by young white men, and underworld elements. In episodes 4-6 there is a subplot of Han Solo and Chewbacca, who represent the lumpenproletariat, are painted as outcasts, rebels-for-hire who are on the run from the wealthy [Jabba the Hut](#) (a crime lord that is like a Mafia figure) who demands payment, works with the empire, and has hired goons (bounty hunters who track down Han Solo in episode 5). In the animated series, these horrid figures return, and also have state sponsors, this time the [Confederacy of Independent Systems](#) (CIS) which is a bit like the early US (1776-1787) which had a similar form of government.

One may ask about the first three movies (1, 2, and 3). In the first movie, a beleaguered galactic republic, a bit like the US's federal-style of government, is plagued by an invasion in a capitalist haven of [Naboo](#) by the mercantile alliance called the [Trade Federation](#), with their own private army of robots that serve to enforce their interests. Ultimately, the Sith Lord, a person who led an order of ancient religious warriors, Palpatine/[Darth Sidious](#) takes power in the republic in order to carry out his ultimate plan to massacre the widely regarded elite religious warriors called the Jedi. In episodes 2 and 3, Palpatine engineers a brutal war between the republic and the CIS which had a legislative body, the [Separatist Senate](#), a bit like the British [House of Commons](#), more than the [House of Lords](#), with both sides having profiteers gaining fat sums from the war. With the end of the war in episode 3, an empire is established in place of the galactic republic, and the Jedi are almost all killed in a pogrom ([order 66](#)), with the clones becoming the stormtroopers who enforce the dictates of the new empire. So, these movies don't necessarily take an anti-fascist take. You could say they are critical of authoritarian government, but the forces on both sides, the Republic and the CIS are not forces to cheer for, although the audience is supposed to sympathize with the Jedi and the Republic, as was made clear in the animated series.

There's not much left to say here. I'd say that the politics in *Futurama*, *the Simpsons*, and Star Trek, among other science fiction, are much better and leave much less to be desired than Star Wars. I haven't decided if to watch *Rogue One* when it comes out later this week, but regardless of this we

should stay critical of the Star Wars franchise while looking at [imagined](#) Communist life in space, [existing relationships](#) between socialism and [science fiction](#), manifested in authors like [H.G. Wells](#). By the same token, depending on films in the Star Wars series to be anti-fascist (if it even is), without looking to actual examples of anti-fascism such as the Soviets fighting the Nazis (mentioned earlier), the Black Panthers standing against the capitalist system with their form of black liberation, and new efforts to defend one's self using armed self-defense against bigots and fascists from Robert F. Williams in the 1950s to the Red Guards in Austin, Texas and people pushing to arm themselves since the advent of the orange menace as President.

Star Wars: The Clone Wars: Predictable drama which is only passable

Name of film: *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*

Date film was first shown: 2008

Date reviewed: March 29, 2019

Rating: 6 out of 10

I just watched this animated film this morning after beginning, to an extent, the "Star Wars: The Clone Wars" animated series, which ran from 2008 to 2014, with new episodes coming due to Disney's desire to reboot the series, with a 50-50 chance they will ruin it. Of the 224 reviews on here which have ratings, over half (124 to be exact) give this film a rating of 6-10, but others half (100 to be exact) think this movie is a stinker and that it should be subjected to distaste without question, giving it a rating of 0-5. Taking that all into account, I'd say that this film is only ok. It obviously does not raise up the caliber of the Simpsons Movie or even any of the Futurama movies. Admittedly those films are comedies, but they are also dramas to an extent.

While this film has a well-established storyline, of Obi-Wan, Anakin, and Ahsoka, the new Padawan assigned to Anakin, fighting to beat domination of a planet by the Separatists, and then to free the baby "Huttlett," the drama is almost too predictable. While you know that the "heroes" (the Jedi) will be victorious over the "villains" (the Sith) in this case, this movie does have some positives. The

characters are not seen as two-dimensional beings but are a bit more relatable, humanized perhaps. The showing of characters as two-dimension beings which are not as relatable is what I think happened a bit in the earlier series (called "Star Wars: Clone Wars") by Genndy Tartakovsky, especially in the first season, but perhaps less so in the second season. The series lasted from 2003 to 2005, which was ceremoniously dumped with the Star Wars: The Clone Wars series superseding it. As such, Tartakovsky's series, which was at times like a magical fable more than just a straight war story, with a set of vignettes, was declared to not be part of the Star Wars canon anymore.

At times, this film falls into the straight war story aspect with predictable fights between Count Dooku and Anakin, between Magnaguards and Ahsoka, between Obi-Wan and Asajj Ventress. Even so, there is, apart from the continual underlying manipulations by Chancellor Palpatine/Darth Sidious (the master manipulator on both sides, a sort of puppetmaster) to get the upper hand, there is the delicate workings of diplomacy, what one could call "aggressive diplomacy" as it was termed by Anakin and Padme in Attack of the Clones, simultaneously by Padme and by Anakin with the Hutts, which is ultimately successful. Obi-Wan does his share of diplomacy but he is more reserved, not literally putting a lightsaber to the neck of Jabba the Hutt as Anakin does at one point. Of course, Padme is engaged in the diplomacy for self-serving reasons, mainly due to her secret/forbidden relationship with Anakin rather than because she is trying to "serve the Republic."

Saying all of this, I think this film is relatively only passable. It is a compelling drama, I'll give you that, and perhaps even a strong lead into the "Star Wars: The Clone Wars" animated series, but that doesn't mean this movie doesn't have its flaws. Like in most Star Wars movies, male characters dominate, in this case Count Dooku and Darth Sidious as villains, and Obi-Wan, Anakin, Yoda, and Mace Windu as heroes. Don't forget that the clones are all men cloned on a planet modeled after a "manly" bounty hunter, and are mostly led by men. However, there are some supporting female characters whom have an important role in the story's plot: Asajj Ventress as a villain and Ahsoka and Padme as heroes. So that's a positive. The centrality of male characters is obvious even from the poster

for this movie: Ahsoka is on the right side (almost in the background), behind Obi-Wan, while Obi-Wan, Anakin, and Yoda form the central three characters in the foreground.

With that, I'd give this movie a rating of a 6, in all fairness and taking into account what I have said above. As such, my review of this film comes to an end.

Analyzing dramatic films

***Untamed*: A compelling drama that marked Crawford's first starring role**

Name of film: *Untamed*

Date film was first shown: 1929

Date reviewed: March 7, 2019

Rating: 7 out of 10

This morning I watched this film as I continue to watch older films like this one. Already I was grumbling a bit as I had wanted to watch *Honor Among Lovers* (1931) but it was hard to find online, so I watched this film instead. The ratings on here on this film go from the lowest (2 stars) to the highest (8 stars), so that opens the ground for my rating. I would not give this film a rating of 10 but would also not dismiss it outright, so I'm willing to give it a "proper chance" as Maleejandra suggested in their review, where they described that in this film she is "wild and free here," with a radiant personality, acting "much more like a savage than a society girl," while she kicks her legs up to throw her skirt up, sleeps in a man's room, seeing him before he is dressed, drinks a good amount of alcohol and is utterly violent, seen as "unladylike." But there is more to say about the film than just this.

The film begins with showing Bingo Dowling (played by Jean Crawford) dancing around in a settlement somewhere in the South American jungle, a bit reminiscent of a sort of stereotypical "Wild West town." In this opening sequence, one man tries to forcibly kiss her, to which she punches him in the nose in response. In the meantime, two suits, as you could call them, Ben Murchison/Uncle Ben (played by Ernest Torrence) and Howard Presley/Uncle Howard (played by Holmes Holbert), approach

Bingo's father, whom is played by Lloyd Ingraham. Soon the scruffy man who tried to kiss Bingo approaches him, saying that he wants to marry Bingo, to which he refuses to grant, leading this man to stab him, grievously injuring him. As he dies in his bed, he says he wants to make sure his daughter gets a sizable part of his oil inheritance and in his dying words he recognizes the joyful Bingo come in, singing with a howler monkey on her shoulder. She is soon devastated when she learns of her father's death, undoubtedly affecting her psychologically.

But she seems to get over this quick as she travels with Uncle Ben and Uncle Howard (whom is not an uncle), accidentally bumping into Andy McAllister (played by Robert Montgomery) who she quickly grows fond of, even though they have known each other very little time. She threatens violence (a punch in the nose), literally against another woman whom Andy is talking with, saying this is "my man" and that Andy isn't "your little boy." Interestingly, she is much more aggressive in her advances toward Andy while he is almost a bit more passive, surprised her passion. Even so, Uncle Ben puts the breaks on this romance, saying it is impossible because there are many other men like Andy in New York (claiming that Andy is not unique) and that Andy has little money. This is one of the points where the movie's logic doesn't add up. If we accept all of his pretenses, it still confounds me that Uncle Ben could not find a job for Andy in the oil fields in South America as an engineer, or at least an engineer-in-training (as his schooling is not done yet). So, his denial of the romance between them is on pretty flimsy grounds, since by the end of the film when they finally get together (spoiler!), he is only earning about \$60 a week, which isn't much better than having no money. Still, it is enough to convince Andy to stay away from her, for over a year, where they are drawn back together.

While you could say that after one year has passed and Bingo is part of high society in New York that she is "tamed," but the fact is she is still "untamed," able to mix the language of high society with her approach of utter violence. This is clear from the fact that she allows for the fight between a jealous man and Andy in the arena, which results in Andy being victorious, in some way proving Andy's "manliness" or "toughness" to her, a spectacle that Uncle Ben is shocked by. Thinking that

Andy is not right for her, Uncle Ben works to interfere yet again, offering Andy a \$50,000 check which he knows will insult him as he objects to the marriage with Bingo because she has so, so much more money than him, leading him to shutter at the idea of literally living off her money. At the film's climax, Bingo takes decisive action (which you can probably guess) to make sure Andy does not go with another woman, bringing them together as the film closes on a happy note.

Now, considering this was the first starring role for Crawford and considering the sound quality of this movie was not the best at times, I am willing to rate it higher than most of the people on here. At the same time, this film has the white savior written all over it, with two white men literally pulling her out of what is considered "the jungle" (it really isn't) and bringing her to New York to make her "civilized." You could also say it is a bit chauvinist in that Bingo wants a strong man as a protector, but the fact is that Andy needs to be pressured and convinced into being at her side, which is not an easy task once they get to New York. Crawford's role reminds me of Ellen Peterson/"The Gamin" (played by Paulette Goddard), alongside Charlie Chaplin as the factory worker, but also of the conception of Tarzan, of a "wild" white man whom was raised by apes on the Atlantic coast of Africa, which is thoroughly racist and sexist as we would see it now. So, I think the film has some of those themes, with "untamed" just being the nice way of saying "savage," clearly. As such, the best I can rate this film is a 7 out of 10, which is lower than my other ratings on here, but this is completely justified based on the nature of the movie itself. And with that, my review of this movie comes to an end.

If You Could Only Cook: A riveting romantic drama

Name of film: *If You Could Only Cook*

Date film was first shown: 1935

Date reviewed: March 6, 2019

Rating: 9 out of 10

Watching this film I was reminded of similar films by Frank Capra since this film has a different director but the same sentiment and similar themes. That's funny because Columbia originally

promoted this as A Frank Capra production even though he wasn't the director! A frustrated executive, Jim Buchanan (played by Herbert Marshall) quits/takes a break from his job at a huge auto company, leaving the corporate world behind as they will not accept his ideas for new types of cars. This conception reminds me of some similarities in the 1991 Simpson's episode Oh Brother, Where Art Thou? (Season 2, episode 15). Back to the film, Buchanan meets a woman whom is down on her luck, Jean Hawthorne, played by Jean Arthur, on a park bench, with both looking through help wanted ads. From that, the idea is floated by Jean that they be a cook and butler together since she is a very good cook even though he knows nothing about being a butler. In fact, after they are hired he tries to learn how to "butle" from his own personal butler, sneaking away in the night.

This leads to a romantic and comedic movie. Jim, posing as "Jim Burns," and Jean posing as his wife, take on personas of sorts. He lives a double life and is planned to be married to another socialite named Evelyn Fisher (played by Frieda Inescort), but he does not tell Jean this. As such he is interested to hear what Jean has to say about Jim Buchanan as she has no idea it is him. Both Jim and Jean work for Mike Rossini, played by Leo Carrillo, and Flash, his right-hand man, played by Lionel Stander, whom seem to be gangsters/mafia type. Flash begins to suspect something is fishy about Jean but never delves into it much, but he does easily find out Jim's double life. He also questions their story because he sleeps out on the porch while she sleeps in the bed since it is custom for married people to sleep together. At the same time, Rossini tries to be sweet on Jean but she quickly rebuffs his advances.

As the film comes to a close, Jim's double life is exposed. Soon Jean finds out and is angry, devastated, but begs them to save Jim rather than killing him. Then, Jim is kidnapped at the altar by Rossini, Flash, and their thugs, leaving his wife-to-be at the altar, literally. He is brought back to the Rossini residence and said he has to marry someone. He is obviously the groom, but what about the bride? Well, it's Jean of course. She resists this and is packing her bags, ready to leave, but then Flash acts like he is shooting Jim so she opens the door in terror and flees to him. This makes me think that Jim planned this, telling Rossini and Flash this plan, with the idea they would capture him and bring

him back to marry Jean. The only problem is this would involve telling them the truth about him, which could have led to problems and it would assume that he knew that Jean loved him. But this is still a plausible theory.

Both Arthur and Marshall play off each other well in this movie, but Stander is the one whom plays comic relief, just like in the 1936 film *Mr. Deeds Comes to Town*, playing a similar type of role. This makes the movie a mix of romance and comedy. You could also say this has a sense of social commentary in that class barriers are not stopping them from working together, with Marshall literally being fluid between his posing as working-class to his life as a capitalist atop an automobile corporation.

With that, my review concludes about this riveting romantic drama, but only riveting enough to be a 9 out of 10 rather than a 10.

The Bitter Tea of General Yen: A compelling drama with "interracial tension," even with yellowface?

Name of film: *The Bitter Tea of General Yen*

Date film was first shown: 1932

Date reviewed: March 6, 2019

Rating: 6 out of 10

Most of the reviews on IMDB are positive on this film, with the lowest rating being a 5 out of 10 and the highest being a 8 out of 10. After reading the more recent criticism of the film for having racial stereotypes I feared it would be as bad as Krusty the Clown's horridly racist rant of a Chinese person in a Simpsons episode. But it was nothing like that, at least mostly. Like most of Capra's films, Barbara Stanwyck (playing Megan Davis) comes to China as a missionary with her husband, Dr. Robert Strike (played by Gavin Gordon) with good intentions, with the hope of helping the people. But, in the process of rescuing orphaned children from a literal war zone, she is knocked unconscious and "saved" by General Yen (played by Nils Asther in yellowface, which is hard to see in the black-and-white film). Now, this could easily cause you to turn up your nose at the whole thing, as it is also

problematic that Yen depends on a white man named Jones (played by Walter Connolly) to be his financial advisor, implying he doesn't know how to handle money or that there is no one in China whom knows how to handle money, which is absurd. There are clearly "creaky bits of racist dialog" which Davis uses, and her missionary friends at the beginning of the film. However, even with the cast being mostly white, this has to be the only Capra film I have watched so far which has people of color in the main cast: Tohia Mori, a Japanese actress, playing a Chinese woman named Mah-Li, and Richard Loo, an actor of Chinese descent, playing Captain Li, along with the host of Yen's advisors.

Now, despite these negatives and the lingering racial stereotypes, which make one cringe, this film is still, I would argue, a compelling drama. Davis at first wants to go back to her husband (Strike), trying to send letters to him by Mah-Li who literally puts them in a drawer. Later she comes to accept her captivity, allowed by Yen as she is presumed dead in Shanghai (where her husband and missionaries are), but then begins to have dreams of an evil Yen, clearly the embodiment of her racial fantasy, attacking her, but then pushed away by the good Yen, whom she kisses passionately. She awakes from these dreams (which happen 2 or 3 times in the film) horrified at first. Yen clearly tries to advance on her more than she advances on him, until the end. You would think that this film would have a kiss like that of a white man, James Kirk (played by William Shatner) and a black woman, Lt. Uhura (played by Nichelle Nichols) in episode 10 (named "Plato's Stepchildren"), season 3 of the Star Trek series, in 1968. But, this never occurs. The closest the film comes to this is Davis crying on the knees of Yen near the end of the film when he drinks poisoned tea (as indicated in the film's title) and kills himself, completed his mission of "conquering" her, as he puts it. After all, she says she "cannot live without him," accepting his "bitter tea." This undoubtedly provoked some controversy at the time, although nowadays it is not seen as controversial in the slightest.

Despite this film's problems, as I have talked about in this review already, I would say that this film pokes at the idea of white people trying to "save" foreign people. For example, Davis is well-meaning and tries to help Mah-Li, but the latter ends up being an agent/spy for Yen's enemies, leading

to the loss of his money and all those around him, as his "empire" (as Jones calls it) collapses.

Additionally, Yen and even Jones, poke at the idea that missionaries know better than the Chinese people, that they somehow know what is "right" for them. In this sense, it is heavily implied that the missionaries are imperialists of sorts, which is historically accurate, working to divide the populace. And sure Yen is harsh, but is he worse than the missionaries that try to convert the "heathens" and cause further division in the country? It's hard to say, ultimately.

As the film ends, Davis goes back to Shanghai on a boat with a drunk Jones, who talks of Yen and she looks longily on, remembering Yen almost in a loving way, as she says nothing more but the camera rather focuses on her facial expressions. It is an open question by the end of the film what will happen of her marriage with Strike, especially since she had an attachment to a man of a different race (for the sake of the story, even though he is a white actor). Unlike other Capra films, this film does not have a necessarily happy ending, especially not for Davis, whom clearly loved Yen. Due to the problems with this film, it would probably be ripe for a remake which would remove the dated racist language and actually cast a Chinese man to play Yen rather than a man with yellowface, along with the removal of the white financial advisor and replaced by a Chinese advisor. However, it is unlikely that this will happen in Hollywood at the present as they are more interested in silly romantic dramas, superhero movies, and the like. I would end by saying that this film, despite its varied problems, is still a compelling drama which is worth watching, and due to such issues I rate it as a 6 out of 10 stars rather than a 10 as some others rate this film.

I'll Never Forget You: A romance & interesting time travel movie

Name of film: *I'll Never Forget You*

Date film was first shown: 1951

Date reviewed: February 24, 2019

Rating: 8 out of 10

After watching a low-quality version of *Berkeley Square* (1933) earlier today, I'd say this movie is undoubtedly superior. It is four times removed from the original as it is a remake of *Berkeley Square* which was based on the 1920s play of the same name, a play that was itself loosely based on Henry James' posthumous novel, *The Sense of the Past*, in 1917.

This movie poses a new sort of time travel concept I haven't seen in other movies focusing on time travel: the fact that a person from the present switches with a person from the past. Again, the main character, Peter Standish (played by Tyrone Power), travels back in time with the lightning bolt opening a wormhole between 1931 and 1784. Unlike the 1933 movie, Standish does not stumble around with mistake after mistake, instead being "gentleman-like." While he is supposed to marry Kate Pettigrew (played by Beatrice Campbell), he actually falls for Helen Pettigrew (played by Ann Blyth), as she seems to somehow know he is from the future. Again, this is not explained how she apparently has these powers. She also "falls for" Standish as well.

Unlike the 1933 movie, Standish has an idea he will do good for society by bringing them inventions like the light bulb, a steam-powered boat, the camera, and more. Unfortunately this proves to be his undoing as it results in him being committed to the "insane asylum" for these inventions.

Just as he is about to be taken away to the asylum he is sucked back the present, with the other Standish returning to the past. Apart from the strange resemblance between Martha Forsyth and Helen Pettigrew, played by the same actress, which is never explained, there are some conundrums by the end of the film. For one, Standish of the present should have recognized why Helen is not in the Standish diaries...because she died before the past Standish arrived. Secondly, how will those in the past see Standish after seeing the future Standish in a terrible light? How can Kate even end up marrying him? So there is a lot of unanswered questions, but a romantic fantasy like this is bound to have plot holes and problems.

It is mentioned briefly how the past Standish was going "completely mad" in the present, trying to rip the house apart, calling cars devil's machines, and so on. That would be a movie I would like to see, but apparently no one wants to (or has) make it.

Repeat Performance: A romance movie but also about time travel

Name of film: *Repeat Performance*

Date film was first shown: 1947

Date reviewed: February 24, 2019

Rating: 8 out of 10

This movie was one of the best I have watched today. It involves the protagonist, Sheila Page (played by Joan Leslie), able to live 1946 over again. She tries to avoid the mistakes she knows occurred but this strategy isn't as successful as she wants. Sheila's husband, Barney (played by Louis Hayward) still has an extramarital affair with Paula Costello (played by Virginia Field). In the end, Barney is not grateful for what Sheila has done for him and helping him out, but just becomes angry, tapping into his apparent innate male rage. Luckily, Sheila's friend, William Williams (played by Richard Basehart) saves her at the end.

This movie poses the question of: if you could live a year over again, would anything change or is it fate (or "destiny")? This of course denies that someone controls their actions and makes it seem actions of people are pre-ordained, which is patently absurd. However, in this regard it is a bit similar to the movie *Click* in 2006 with Adam Sandler, although in that movie he is fast-forwarding through time.

I would say on the whole this movie was enjoyable even though it was from 1947 and was in black-and-white.

Berkeley Square: Only a somewhat interesting film

Name of film: *Berkeley Square*

Date film was first shown: 1933

Date reviewed: February 24, 2019

Rating: 6 out of 10

While the version of this movie I watched online was low-quality, the plot of simple: a man lives in the same house as his ancestors and converses with them. He was not very good with time travel, from the present (1934) to the past (1784), making all sorts of mistakes. Even so when he gets back to the present apparently nothing has changed which seems faulty considering how much he messed with the timeline and co-founded people. Interestingly one character, Kate, was the only one who understood him and apparently could somehow see the future too, although this was not really explained. All in all, while this movie was enjoyable, it was not as good as other time travel movies I have seen and I would not recommend it.

You could say that this film is "filled with gentle humor and appealing pathos," or an "imaginative, beautiful and well-handled production" or even "artistically and handsomely produced and beautifully acted" as said at the time. But I would not say that at all, because I found this film a bit confusing compared to the later remake of this film in *I'll Never Forget You* (1951), which I thought was much stronger. Perhaps someday I will rewatch this film again, but likely it will not be anytime soon, as I would rather watch other films for my enjoyment as a sort of mental break from usual drudgery. Danny, the movie critic of Pre-Code Hollywood films, [did review this film](#), and I have to agree with him that this film "feels very stagey and very proper," but also think that the idea that "that the future will revolt and isolate us no matter how wondrous its achievements" is something that can be related to, without a doubt. The Britishness of this movie is also annoying to say the least, which TCM admits in their review of the film as well.

With that, I end this review and say this film deserves a rating of 5 out of 10, if not lower.

The Shining: Classic Drama and Horror Movie

Name of film: *The Shining*

Date film was first shown: 1980

Date reviewed: January 19, 2019

Rating: 10 out of 10

This movie is so classic it has been parodied by College Humor and by *The Simpsons*, the latter in one of their Treehouse of Horror episodes, about the “Shinning” with Homer saying “No TV And Beer Make Homer Go Crazy” to Marge, while it says “feelin’ fine” on his typewriter, with Marge grabbing a bat to only use in “cases of spousal insanity,” lol. Apart from the “here comes Johnny!” scene, this film, directed by Stanley Kubrick, is effective in many ways. Stephen King hated the film but that doesn’t mean we have to share his viewpoint. In fact, we should vehemently disagree with it, as this film has staying power and I say that as a person that generally dislikes horror films.

Apart from Jack Nicholson’s performance as Jack Torrance, I think that Shelley Duvall’s performance as Wendy Torrance is also effective. Of course the performance of Danny Lloyd as Danny Torrance is also good, but performances by Nicholson and Duvall steal the show. This haunting film is made more dramatic with the music score, pulling you in. I think it is unfortunate that none of the main cast were people of color except Scatman Crothers, whom plays Dick Hallorann, whom is killed by a White man. So, you could say that this film is not only about male violence against women but pure White male rage, to say the least.

The fact that the ending is ambiguous about whether Jack died or not means this isn’t necessarily a happy ending like typical Hollywood movies but it keeps the audience guessing. You could say it would be hard to connect with the characters, like Roger Ebert said at the time, after the film was released, or that the film had slow pacing. But, not every film needs or should have the same pacing, as some films should have slower and more methodical pacing. I’d say that while some at the time said this was an “ineffective scare movie,” the result at the present is that it is an effective scare movie without question. With that, my review of this film comes to a close.

***A Hologram for the King*—addressing class and racial elements in Saudi society**

Name of film: *A Hologram for the King*

Date film was first shown: 2016

Date reviewed: November 13, 2016.

Text for review taken from a post on the Leftist Critic blog titled "[A bastion of imperialism: the corrupted nature of Saudi society.](#)"

The class and racial elements of Saudi society are addressed in the recent Hollywood comedic drama named *A Hologram for the King* which bombed at the box office. Usually movies about Arabs are utterly horrible. [Jack G. Shaheen](#), an [late] authority on media images and stereotypes of Muslims and Arabs, argues in his tome which reviews 900 Hollywood films, says that the vast majority of them distort Arabs of all ages and genders, saying that from 1896 to the present, "Hollywood's caricature of the Arab has prowled the silver screen...[staying] as repulsive and unrepresentative as ever...[with] Arabs are brute murderers, sleazy rapists, religious fanatics, and abusers of women," treated as the other. [1] The problem with this, of course, is while Arabs can be villains in movies, "almost *all* Hollywood depictions of Arabs are *bad* ones" with repetitive and duplicitous images going across generations.

This movie was a bit different in that there were no heroes, no villains, just star actor Tom Hanks playing a businessperson, Alan Clay, who is trying to find his way in a culture foreign to him. Without getting into the movie too much, in one instance, one character, a Saudi cab driver, Yousef (a [white actor named Alexander James Black](#) who acts as a person of color, yet again), asks Clay "so if I start a democratic revolution here, you would support me?," to which Clay says that he would personally fight for a revolution, but that the US would not send troops, air support, or other assistance. The conversation, of course, is just brushed off, but is telling since it seems to indicate the tensions in society itself. At another point, Clay says when looking at workers working on the roads of a future "desert city" that "I'm guessing these aren't union men." Yousef responds "Oh, we don't have unions here. We have Filipinos." This is also not addressed any further and is passed by, but is worth noting regardless.

Later, there is a scene when Clay talks to a nearby Saudi who asks "You work for CIA or something?" after seeing him take a lot of picture, with him joking "Just a little freelance work. Nothing full-time." Of course, the Saudi takes this joke seriously and Hanks tells his cab driver to head off what he deems is a "ludicrous question" by telling the Saudi "if I was from the CIA, I wouldn't tell the first person who asked me" and shakes his hand. You could say this makes Saudis look dumb for asking about the CIA, but at the same time it is treated as normal and expected as Saudis, like many in the "Third World," know to watch out for the CIA based on what they've done. Also, it pokes at Hanks's character (and by extension all Americans) are naive about the actions of the CIA. All Hollywood movies have problems, but this one seemed more positive about Arabs and Saudis than other movies, so that is a good thing. To be clear, I'm not trying to promote this movie, I'm just trying to bring in something I thought was relevant to the subject of this article. If you wish to watch or not watch this movie, that's up to you.

Mary, Queen of Scots: A “feminist” period drama?

Name of film: *Mary, Queen of Scots*

Date film was first shown: 2018

Date reviewed: March 9, 2019

Rating: 8 out of 10

I watched this movie tonight and thought it would be proper to write a review. Saoirse Ronan, playing Mary, Queen of Scots, and Margot Robbie, playing Queen Elizabeth I. While this historical accuracy of this movie is questionable, as can be found from any analysis of this film like those from the *Independent*, the *Wrap*, and *Vulture* cited on the Wikipedia article for this movie, there is one part of this film that is unlike others. It focuses on how the courts of each of these powerful women are manipulated by men, leading to discord and division.

It's hard to remember all the twists and turns in this movie, but it comes down to Mary and Elizabeth being rivals, with Elizabeth in this movie shown as more hardnosed thanks to her anti-

Catholic, pro-Protestant advisors while Mary is seen as more open. At one point Elizabeth even says she is a "man" because of her time sitting on the English throne, which is interesting to say the least. While Mary gets married to another man, and has a child, which later becomes James I. There is also the dramatic scene of Mary and Elizabeth meeting, at the film's climax, even though it never happened.

With this all being said this film is rather compelling and has great period costume design. Additionally the settings, especially the scenes in Scotland, are beautiful. However, like many Hollyweird films on royalty, it ends up whitewashing it as something that was just was and can't be changed. That is a major problem with this film. Of course you can say that filmmakers have the right to dramatic license but this is often used by Hollyweird to distort the reality of history of the past. It would be too much to find an anti-monarchial film from Hollyweird. Instead you will find a film like this which poses as "feminist." That is a problem to say the least.

In the end, while this period drama has its positives, for the reasons I have already highlighted I am rating this film as an 8 out of 10. With that my review of this film comes to an end.

Bender's Big Score: A compelling animated drama

Name of film: *Bender's Big Score*

Date film was first shown: 2007

Date reviewed: March 14, 2019

Rating: 8 out of 10

Tonight I decided to watch this movie once again, which I've probably watched 3 to 4 times, at least, in the past. With the 80 reviews on here ranging from 1 to 10 stars, that gives a lot of latitude for my rating and review, a range to be within. I would argue that it would be wrong to rate this as a measly 1 star but also not right to give it an excellent rating of 10, so my rating of 8 goes right in-between.

The plot of this movie is simple: Planet Express is back in business after being canceled by the Box/Fox Network (with a parody of network executives as "assine morons") and is scammed by a

group of nudist aliens, with the rest of the movie being about our "heroes" trying to fight them off and prevail. These "heroes" comprise the main cast/crew of the Futurama show: Turanga Leela (voiced by Katey Sagal), Philip J. Fry (voiced by Billy West), Bender Rodriguez (voiced by John DiMaggio), Prof. Hubert J. Farnsworth (voiced by Billy West), Dr. John Zoidberg (voiced by Billy West), Amy Wong (voiced by Lauren Tom) and Bureaucrat Hermes Conrad (voiced by Phil LaMarr) with supporting characters being Cubert Farnsworth (voiced by Kath Soucie), Nibbler (voiced by Frank Welker), Al Gore (playing himself), Lars Fillmore (voiced by Billy West), Zapp Brannigan (voiced by Billy West), Robot Santa (voiced by John DiMaggio), Barbados Slim (voiced by John DiMaggio), Ethan "Bubblegum" Tate (voiced by Phil LaMarr), Nudar (voiced by David Herman), LaBarbara Conrad (voiced by Dawnn Lewis), Kwanzaa-bot (voiced by Coolio), Chanukah Zombie (voiced by Mark Hamill), Yancy Fry, Jr. (voiced by Tom Kenny), and Michelle (voiced by Sarah Silverman).

Now, onto the rest of the review. I thought the film was funny a times but for me was a more effective drama than anything else. At times the plot had inconsistencies, like Fry somehow knowing where his fellow crew mates were having a funeral for him, or the fact that Bender's dummy ships seemed to fire lasers even though they were dummy ships. It also seems odd that with Nibbler saying that the universe will shatter and/or it will be the end of causality, that this doesn't happen sooner considering that there were 50, at minimum, travels through time which created duplicates. Apparently Fry only created another duplicate, whom became "Lars Fillmore," living in New York City from 2000 to 2012, also explaining how his dog was fossilized. But for this to fit with the rest of Futurama canon it means the events of this movie had to already have happened, just like with *Somewhere in Time* (1980), creating a paradox in and of itself.

In terms of social commentary, you could say that perhaps there is some, with slight criticism of religion, people's gullibility, rampant commercialism, sexism, and such. I actually think that *The Simpsons Movie*, which was released in movie theaters while thus was directly released to video, has much more biting social commentary. Even so, it is still a compelling drama with a substory of

romance between Leela and Lars, and another of Hermes trying to win his wife, LaBarbara back. Like The Simpsons, stereotypes are rampant here, you could say, from the Jamaican Hermes, the dottering professor (Farnsworth), the klutzy girl (Amy), the immature 90s kid (Fry), the incompetent doctor (Zoidberg), and the alcoholic/master criminal (Bender). I'm not sure Leela would fall into stereotype category as she is probably the most headstrong character. Even if they embody these stereotypes they live beyond and outside them, rather than simply embodying them, which is generally the case in the show as well.

With that, my review of this film comes to an end, even though I recognize that this film needs to be watched as one of four films, with the next three being The Beast with A Billion Backs (2008), Bender's Game (2008), and Into the Wild Green Yonder (2009), before the show began again in Season 6, since all the movies compromised "Season 5."

The Beast with a Billion Backs: Robots, heaven, and existential questions

Name of film: *Bender's Big Score*

Date film was first shown: 2007

Date reviewed: March 15, 2019

Rating: 8 out of 10

Following in the footsteps of *Bender's Big Score*, this animated (and direct-to-video) film features the Planet Express crew of the show *Futurama* (Leela, Fry, Bender, Prof. Farnsworth, Dr. Zoidberg, Amy, and Hermes) on their next adventure, joined by the William Shatner/James T. Kirk parody, Zapp Brannigan (voiced by Billy West), Amy's husband Kif (voiced by Maurice LaMarche), the Robot Devil (voiced by Dan Castellaneta), Yivo (played by David Cross), Colleen O'Hallahan (played by Brittany Murphy), Dr. Wernstrom (voiced by David Herman), and many others. One month has passed since Bender's reckless actions, which disrupted the space-time continuum, opened a rip in the universe, and the *Planet Express* crew goes on a mission to explore this anomaly. There are some hilarious parts, like when they all gasp they will learn more about the anomaly at a scientific

conference, a place where Stephen Hawking (playing himself) acts like a jerk, shooting lasers out of his eyes, and such. Anyway, in Fry's desperation after his failed relationship with Colleen, whom was polyamorous, or wants to have an open relationship with five men of different cultures, leading to utter confusion, he enters the other universe. As he is literally dying, he is saved by Yivo, an octopus-like creature with one eye and purple tentacles.

Soon, the tentacles enter the Earth after breaking through Wornstrom's "diamondilium" sphere around the planet (an idea which was actually Farnsworth's) and Fry heads this new "religion," as he calls it, where all people are said to "love the tentacle." At first people are afraid of it (with a failed assault led by Brannigan and varied other ships), but then they accept it, until it is clear that it is mating with all of them (as Leela reveals)...the most expansive open relationship! This disgusts everyone, perhaps showing their prudishness, but they eventually embrace it, and are brought to what could be considered "heaven." Leela is skeptical, but is won over just before Bender and his league of robots, with an "army of the damned" says they are "saving" Fry and others in "heaven," since they cannot cross the universe barrier. Their idea is since they cannot visit the other universe, they will bring heaven to them. Perhaps this is how the robots are able to physically hurt Yivo, as it was said earlier in the film that nothing in the universe with Earth could hurt Yivo. If not, this is a bit of a plot issue, to say the least! There the relationship between Yivo and humanity/species in the universe with Earth ends, with all humans thrown onto the robots' ship, turning it into a sort of refugee ship, which is ironic because Bender leads a group which says it wants to "kill all humans." This is a common contradiction as Bender often says he wants to do this, yet he is friends/roommates with Fry, a human from the 20th century, and is on a crew with various other humans, whom he calls "meatbags" (like Farnsworth, Hermes, and Amy), whom he never attempts to kill.

With that summary being done, the question remains: what does this movie mean? Clearly when the humans are on this "heaven" they are content, not arguing with each other, but by the end of the film they are at each other's throats again, just as Wornstrom and Farnsworth have been with their

never-ending enmity for each other. This movie has the themes of love and loss, from Fry's failed relationship to Colleen, to humanity's up-and-down relationship with Yivo, to Amy's relationship with Kif (during which she cheats on him by sleeping with Zapp), and Leela not wanting any relationship as well. It also connects with the existential questions of existence, like why we are here at all, although *The Meaning of Life* (1983) is much better in this regard. Again, there really isn't much social commentary other than talking of the power of organized religion, government incompetence (in that Wornstrom and Farnsworth are imprisoned while Zapp leads a military mission, leading to slight anti-military statements from both scientists), and such, but that's about it.

That being said, this film is still enjoyable as an effective drama, although it's probably not as funny, as a comedy, than something like *The Simpsons Movie*, which came out one year earlier. With that, my review of this film comes to a close.

***Memento*: Nolan explores the depths of memory**

Name of film: *Memento*

Date film was first shown: 2000

Date reviewed: April 1, 2019

Rating: 10 out of 10

Last night I watched this film, after re-watching *If Beale Street Could Talk*, which was a sharp departure from the aforementioned film. Explored is the similar theme of memory and remembering, one which often comes up in shows like *Mr. Robot*, which is ending this year and Terry Gilliam's strange dystopian film, *Twelve Monkeys*, in 1995. The plot is simple: the protagonist, Leonard Shelby, played by Guy Pearce, has lost his short-term memory and is trying to find the killer of his wife, Catherine Shelby (played by Jorja Fox). As he tells the audience, he lost his memory as he was knocked out after he shot his wife's killer, so he remembers "important facts" on Polaroids he takes and on tattoos across his body. Certain characters literally take advantage of this condition like a local bartender, Natalie, played by Carrie-Anne Moss, to kill/intimidate her boyfriend, Dodd, played by

Callum Keith Rennie, and the head of a local hotel, Burt, played by Mark Boone Junior, the latter whom charges him for two separate rooms because he "won't remember." However, the story posed by John Edward "Teddy" Gammell, played by Joe Pantoliano, who claims to be an undercover cop which is investigating local gangs, including James F. "Jimmy" Grantz, played by Larry Holden. In the story Teddy tells, the protagonist killed his own wife, whom had diabetes, with injection of insulin, and now goes around from town to town killing people whom he claims are the "killer" of his wife! If this is the case, however, why does Teddy allow it to happen? Has the protagonist conditioned himself, as he claims happened with the case of Samuel R. "Sammy" Jankis (played by Stephen Tobolowsky) and Mrs. Jankis (played by Harriet Sansom Harris)? Or is that just a fabrication in his mind?

By the end of the film, the viewer is still relatively confused. Whom can be trusted? Teddy or the protagonist? We still don't know. We know no more than the story provides us. It is almost an obvious bet that every character is lying to the audience, deceiving each other in some way or another. But that makes the film interesting. In this way it is similar to *Happy Accidents* (2000) in that we don't know whether Sam Deed (played by Vincent D'Onofrio) is telling the truth about his travel from the future to the present, or if he is just a con man trying to make ends meet. This is why neurologists praise this film, as do film critics as it is a film that keeps you thinking.

I could be like soloyoda in their April 2001 review of this film but I think summarizing part of the plotline is worth doing, especially since there is no "happy ending" to this film, or no spoilers in the sense that they will ruin the movie's enjoyment. This film is much more than what that review calls "a highly intelligence and original brain teaser that will have you guessing from beginning to end, and even afterwards," although that is abundantly true without question. I would add that this film is interesting in that it is not a straight narrative from beginning to end, but jumps around. In some ways this makes it resemble *Pulp Fiction* (1994), although that film is, in and of itself, its own animal. Additionally, I would say this film (Nolan's second film he directed after *Following* in 1998) differs

from Nolan's other films, although it shares some similarities, in terms of a focus on memory and remembering, with *Inception* (2010) and *Interstellar* (2014).

With that, I bring this review to a close and feel that it fully deserves a 10 out of 10, a rating I give out sparingly, only to the films I like the most.

Possessed: From the factory to the big city

Name of film: *Possessed*

Date film was first shown: 1931

Date reviewed: April 3, 2019

Rating: 7 out of 10

You may ask, what in "god's name" (as people like to say), possessed you to write a review of a movie released 88 years ago, with actresses like Joan Crawford (playing Marian Martin), Clara Blandick (playing Marian's mother), Marjorie White (playing Vernice LaVerne), and actors like Clark Gable (playing Mark Whitney), Wallace Ford (playing Al Manning), Richard "Skeets" Gallagher (playing Wally Stuart), Frank Conroy (playing Horace Travers), and John Miljan (playing John Driscoll)? Well, perhaps I was pulled in as much as the protagonist, Marian, as she is "influenced or controlled by something" rather than "mad, crazed" to take from the definition of the word by Merriam-Webster. Marian works in a box factory, apparently in Erie, PA, wanting a change from her "boring" life in the quaint small town, with fellow worker, Al, continually trying to get her to marry him. After meeting a man on the train, Mark, she has the urge, the pull toward the big city, specifically of New York. In this way, this film has similarities with *Forbidden* (1932) and even *Untamed* (1929), the latter which featured Crawford in her first starring role. The move of the protagonist from a small town to the big city is also a theme of *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939) and *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (1936), both of which are Capra films.

My favorite part of this film was the first 5-10 minutes, if I have that timing right, which shows the operation of the factory and the mechanics of the factory town itself, which is in a broad way

sympathetic to the worker. Of course, this is a romantic film (unlike other films like *If You Could Only Cook* in 1935 or *Platinum Blonde* in 1931), but Marian, the film's protagonist, is no dummy, but is fully aware of her actions, basically a "gold digger," as they would call it, having some similarities with *Ladies of Leisure* (1930) or *That Certain Thing* (1928). Apart from being "possessed" by the big city, perhaps she is in a sense, possessed by love with Mark, a person whom is rising in the political world and is relatively wealthy. This causes her to question herself various times, although she never takes the step like Stew Smith in *Platinum Blonde*, whom would rather be the person he loves rather than a rich snob. After being with him for three years, as a mistress rather than a wife, she splits with him after learning that being with him would apparently ruin his political career (as claimed by the bankers who are backing Mark in his upcoming run for governor). In that way, this film's social commentary is not as strong as other contemporary ones in the 1930s that I've seen so far, specifically not those by Frank Capra. As such, there really isn't any criticism of wealth or society as a whole.

As the film comes to close, it directly enters the realm of politics. Mark begins his run for governor, while others try to slime him, like the villains of *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1938) or the machinations of the "alternative facts" press in *The Power of the Press* (1928). He has no favorable press like Charles Foster Kane in *Citizen Kane* (1941). They heckle him during his speech, where he expresses progressive views akin to FDR but also seems somewhat anti-interventionist, to a packed auditorium at the film's end, then drop fliers asking "Who is Mrs. Moreland?" to which Mark doesn't know how to answer. Then Marian gives a short speech attesting to Mark's honesty and honorable, leaving in sobs as the crowd cheers, fooling the plan of Mark's enemies to "smear him." The film ends with Marian embraced by Mark, a clear "happy ending."

While I generally dislike happy endings, I think this film was generally well-acted and done, but with the lack of social commentary it seems right to rate it as a 7 out of 10. With that, my review of this film comes to a close.

Safe in Hell: A riveting pre-code drama

Name of film: *Safe in Hell*

Date film was first shown: 1931

Date reviewed: April 5, 2019

Rating: 9 out of 10

This morning to take a break from my usual routine, I watched this pre-code film, which has a paltry 35 reviews here on IMDB. I had already planned on watching it based on the fact that the protagonist, Gilda Karlson (played by Dorothy Mackaill) is often "provocatively dressed" and a prostitute whom won't let men push her around. It's funny that at the time, some publications like *Time* magazine called it "trite" and sporadically exciting," the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* saw the film as amusing and praised the performance of Leonie (played by Nina Mae McKinney) as the "best thing in the picture" while *Variety* grumbled about the film's "sad and unsatisfactory finish" and the "constantly depressing air of evil which prevails throughout the picture," even though they felt the movie's Black actors, specifically McKinney and Clarence Muse (playing the porter, Newcastle) were "comedy relief." Perhaps it is the low ratings in the reviews, by gbill-74877 in March 2018, MartinHafer in December 2007, writers_reign in July 2008, and moonspinner55 in March 2008, on IMDB of this film reflect that sentiment. Unlike those reviewers, I thoroughly enjoyed this film. For one, it was good to see the female protagonist in a combative, if not stronger role that is not submissive. The fact that she defends herself and seems to kill Piet Van Saal (played by Ralf Harolde), a man whom led her into prostitution, in a fire in New Orleans shows she won't put up with those whom try to mess around with her. You could say that, sure, she is married to a sailor and a former boyfriend, Carl Erickson (played by Donald Cook) that she is tied down, but most of the movie takes place on the Caribbean island of Tortuga (an island of Haiti), where the laws are said to be strict but there is no extradition laws, making the island a den for criminals wanting to escape the clutches of the law.

In many ways the film has play-like elements, which is no surprise as it was adapted from a play by well-known screenwriter Houston Branch. Some of the scenes, like when the main cast of characters, Eagan (played by John Wray), Crunch (played by Ivan Simpson), General Gomez (played by Victor Varconi), a lawyer named Jones (played by Charles Middleton), Larson (played by Gustav von Seyffertitz), where all of them lean back on chairs, relaxing, pining for Gilda, whom refuses their offers, reminds me of similar play-like scenes of people sitting around at a table in Spike Lee's *Do The Right Thing* (1990). They also act like a bit of comedy troupe at times. While Gilda originally just stays in her room as she doesn't want to get involved with the criminals in the hotel she is staying, she does interact with them a bit by having a late night drink with them. But that's kind of a one night off as she is tired of being cooped up in her hotel room, understandably. She faces off with the villain of the film, effectively, the hangman and jailer, Mr. Bruno (played by Morgan Wallace) who is the face of law on the island itself. Eventually he tries to frame her for a crime of having a deadly weapon (which he gave her to "defend herself"), which she uses to kill Piet, whom tries to rape her, but for some reason she incriminates herself to save herself for Carl, which logically makes no sense. That is a point I'll agree with when it comes to the more critical reviews on here of the film. But there's still something more I'd like to say.

For one, it is deeply disturbing to me that the hotel and what we see of the island seems literally built upon serving the needs of White people. No natives of Tortuga seem to run the show, with the face of the law (the policeman) and the judge as White men, but the two policeman are seemingly people of Tortuga, as are the main hotel staff, Leonie and Newcastle. This is even worse than the servitude of Annie (played by Lillian Randolph), maid of the Bailey family in *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946). I'm not sure if the actual island of Tortuga functioned this way, but if so, than this strongly depicts in a matter-of-fact way the exploitation of the native people of Tortuga by White people at the time. So in that way, this film has problematic themes to it. Even so, you could say that this film has its positives of a strong female character whom could said to be feminist to an extent, although not completely. It is also

interesting to have a character, General Gomez, whom was a successful revolutionary, but had to run away after killing the president and vice-president of a county, reminding me a bit of King Shadov (played by Charlie Chaplin) in *A King in New York* (1957).

With that, my review of this film comes to a close, feeling it fully deserves a rating of 9 out of 10 for the reasons I previously stated.

Frankenstein: A “marauding” monster and the “madness” of science

Name of film: *Frankenstein*

Date film was first shown: 1931

Date reviewed: April 8, 2019

Rating: 10 out of 10

Last night, the lightning of the thunderstorm struck outside, “madness” overtook me as my creation came alive on the table, its hand twitching, and I declared, in front of my fiancé-to-be, father, and fellow scientist, that “I know what it feels like to BE God!,” which would be considered blasphemy by some. I am describing the pivotal scene in this film, which boards in Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and New York objected to, even censoring the scene when the monster kills a girl of the village of the Bavarian Alps, where the film is set, Maria (played by Marilyn Harris), by accidentally drowning her, a scene which was only rediscovered in the 1980s in a collection of the British National Film Archive and then re-incorporated into the film itself. This was a film that pulled in enough popularity, although it only earned \$12 million at the box office, that Hollywood decided to make a string of sequels like the *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935), *Son of Frankenstein* (1939), *The Ghost of Frankenstein* (1942), and *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man* (1943).

While there are 544 reviews of this film on IMDB currently, I will chart my own path with this review. As the film began I felt like I was watching the first *Treehouse of Horror* episode of *The Simpsons* where Marge appears in front of a curtain to warn the audience of the horrors that will unfold. As the film went on, the storyline was abundantly clear. Henry Frankenstein (played by Colin

Clive) is a “mad scientist” whom is working with a hunchback named Fritz (played by Dwight Frye) feels that he can bring “life” to something that was once dead, creating a creature by harnessing the lightning of a storm. Henry’s fiancé-to-be, Elizabeth Lavenza (played by Mae Clark), her friend Victor Moritz (played by John Boles), and Dr. Waldman (played by Edward Van Sloan), visit him in his castle atop the hill, watch as the creature is brought to life, a creation which has one problem: it has an abnormal brain. Soon, as the creature/monster awakes, it is tortured in a sense by Henry and Fritz, who, along with Victor and Dr. Waldman, try to control it. This is a failure, as after Henry leaves with his fiancé-to-be, proving that Henry’s father, Baron Frankenstein (played by Frederick Kerr) is wrong to think that Henry has found another woman, Dr. Waldman is overpowered by the monster (played by Boris Karloff), which kills him and proceeds to leave what is, in effect, its prison, to go out to the town below. It is there that the monster accidentally kills Maria, whom is alone after her father, Ludwig (played by Michael Mark), leaves to go to town. Soon after Ludwig comes into town during the celebrations for the wedding of Henry and Elizabeth, with his drowned daughter in his arms, the men of the town are searching for the monster (with the women strangely left behind, showing a clear gender divide here). Eventually they track the monster down and it brings an unconscious Henry, whom it had attacked earlier, to the windmill, which is soon burned to the ground, with the monster trapped outside but not before Henry is thrown off the windmill by the monster, whom is only injured by the fall, with the wedding soon celebrated by Baron Frankenstein in the film’s last moments.

There’s a lot more to take in from this film. For one, unlike films like *Contact* where science is seen as engaging in wasteful endeavors which only benefit, directly or indirectly, capitalists, this film highlights the danger of science and the danger of creation. Maybe it is a lesson that those whom created the atomic bomb should have had in mind before creating such an abomination. Perhaps this is saying we shouldn’t accept everything for science, but also allow for discovery to occur, with Henry only going to the depths of his creation because the university he was part of rejected his ideas as “too radical,” putting him literally on the margins. Secondly, this film also seems to be about the power of

creation, including of life and death itself, and has been influential enough to be effectively spoofed in Mel Brooks' *Young Frankenstein* (1974) and partially so in the animated *Frankenthumb*. I also think that the search scene in *The Truman Show* (1998) is a homage to the search scene in this film. Perhaps even the scene where the townspeople confront *The Simpsons* with torches is also an homage to this film as well. It should also be no surprise that in various *Treehouse of Horror* episodes of the *Simpsons* (specifically III, XIV, XVIII, XX, and XXI) the film is referenced, for the 2015 film *Ex Machina* to retell the Frankenstein story with a feminine android in the 21st century, or for famed science fiction author, Isaac Asimov to coin the term "Frankenstein complex" to describe the fear of robots. In the end, this film has a very powerful effect on the viewer and is not as much of a horror or thriller film but rather a thoughtful and effective drama.

With that, it seems only right to rate this film as a 10 out of 10, which I tend to not give many films these days anymore.

The Phantom President: From musical comedy to political satire

Name of film: *The Phantom President*

Date film was first shown: 1932

Date reviewed: April 8, 2019

Rating: 8 out of 10

Note: It's funny, because Danny, a movie critic that focuses on pre-code films from Hollywood whom I found after I watched this film, [calls the film absolute dreck](#). I just have to disagree with him on that.

If I was to rely on the two summaries of this film, the first by Sin Jack and the second by Rod Crawford, saying that a presidential candidate is said to have a dull personality with a charismatic medicine salesman and huckster whom looks alike is hired to take his place to win the election, even fooling the girlfriend of this man, and that this huckster has difficult decisions of his own on the eve of the election, I would think that is all the movie is about. Similarly, if I was to rely on Wikipedia I'd think this film is fictional political satire, based on George F. Worts' novel, where a stiff and colorless

presidential candidate is replaced in public appearances by a charismatic and energetic pitchman for a medicine show. While those descriptions aren't wrong, there is a lot more going on. Theodore K. Blair is the stiff candidate whom doesn't have political gravitas, disliked by political bosses like Jim Ronkton (played by George Barbier), Prof. Aikenhead (played by Sidney Toller), and Senator Melrose (played by Julius McVicker), especially after Felicia Hammond (played by Claudette Colbert) rejects his marriage proposal. But when Peeter J. 'Doc' Varney, assisted by Curly Cooney (played by Jimmy Durante) the political bosses are the resemblance between Varney and Blair, whom are hilariously played by the same actor, George M. Cohan. Not surprisingly this temporarily fools Jerrido (played by Jameson Thomas) Blair's butler and Felicia. As the film goes on, Varney gets all the glory as he plays as Blair while the actual Blair eventually becomes tired of this charade and takes action. After Felicia makes a bold move to disrupt Blair's plans, Varney has a crisis of confidence and says he is a huckster on air, but is still elected regardless. As the film ends, Varney becomes president with Curly as his right-hand man while Blair is somewhere in the Arctic circle eating blubber.

There is much more to this film however. As anyone should I grimaced at the blackface worn by Cohen in this film, just as I grimaced at the yellowface worn by Nils Asther, playing General Yen in Frank Capra's *The Bitter Tea of General Yen*, which came out one year later. While that undoubtedly marks the film down and I thought the part with the singing presidents, like Teddy Roosevelt, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln (played by Charles Middleton), and George Washington (played by Alan Mowbray), along with other "founders," was a bit silly, the film was still a strong drama. At one point Barney admits they are selling musical comedy to the masses which is funny because the film is a musical comedy. I also enjoyed the comic relief coming from Curly and the name of Prof. Aikenhead obviously being reminiscent of "egghead."

The film was also, obviously, a political satire. Perhaps it is saying the people of the US can be sold on anything for president which is troubling. It is hard to discern what political party Varney/Blair is part of, as I would say it is Republican because of the invocation of Lincoln but they also sound a bit

like the view of the Democratic Party. Looking at the party platforms for each respective party in 1932 does not clear this up at all. In this plotline, what does the election of Varney mean? Is he really honest or will be like a snake-oil-salesman? It's hard to say, to be honest.

At the end of the film, other than what I have previously outlined, I'm not sure what the full takeaway is. However I would say that Cohan (one of the few films he acted in) and Colbert engage in commendable performances. While I only know Colbert from *It Happened One Night* (1934), she did a wonderful job here too. I liked Durante's performance as well. Taking this all into account I think it is only right to rate this film as an 8 out of 10, with this review being the 13th one on IMDB of this film.

Trouble in Paradise: From petty thievery to enveloping romance

Name of film: *Trouble in Paradise*

Date film was first shown: 1932

Date reviewed: April 9, 2019

Rating: 9 out of 10

In [his review of the film](#), Danny, a movie critic that specifically focuses on pre-code Hollywood movies on pre-code.com, writes that not only does this film have thieves as protagonists and rich people "luxuriate in lurid affairs" but that it rare to see a movie like this "that makes sex look this damn sexy," saying that the film concerns two well-manner thieves: Gaston (played by Herbert Marshall), a big-time thief, and Lily (played by Miriam Hopkins), a "playful pickpocket," becoming soulmates, while they both work together to try and rob a magnate of a perfume company, Madame Colet (played by Kay Francis), with Lily as his secretary and he is the secretary of Colet, trying to seduce her. Danny argues the movie's message is more to do about drawing the "line between what you need and what you desire." But there's much more here, although Danny hit on some important points which I needn't repeat in my review to follow.

This film actually reminds me a bit, in terms of the question that Gaston poses at the end to Colet, asking if his thievery is worse than the chairman of the board whom is stealing millions through

cooking the books, of the speech by Monsieur Henri Verdoux (played by Charlie Chaplin) in *Monsieur Verdoux* (1947), which was received with hostility in the US due to the left-leaning politics of Chaplin but was relatively successful in Europe. In that movie, Verdoux tells the court, while accepting the guilty sentence that the world encourages mass killing through the building of "weapons of destruction for the sole purpose of mass killing," adding the key line of "as a mass killer, I am an amateur by comparison. However, I do not wish to lose my temper, because very shortly, I shall lose my head" and implies that mass killing will come to them soon. It is interesting in this film that Gaston rejects Colet, despite that fact he "fell in love" with her, going back to Lily, his sidekick and soulmate, to continue their thievery together as an effective team, as the film comes to a close. I also liked the intrigue throughout the movie as the audience knew whom he truly was, but the characters did not. In another way, this double identity for Gaston was actually a bit like Frederic Bourdin in Bart Layton's strange, twisted, and weirdly fascinating documentary film, *The Imposter* (2012) when he acted like the lost son of a family but turned out to be...an imposter.

Other than what I have already said, I think this film is an effective drama. While I have not watched any films with Miriam Hopkins or Kay Francis, I thought they were both strong actresses. The same goes for Herbert Marshall, whom played a strong part but I had seen before in *If You Could Only Cook* (1935), a wonderful film in its own right with Jean Arthur. The criticism of those at the top of business as crooks, as you could extrapolate that the chairman of the board is not the only one stealing from the company, is bold and strong, in line with themes in films like *American Madness* (1932) and more recent films like *Wall Street* (1987). Perhaps you could also say the ad for the perfume company itself was also critical of commercialism of the time, which I can't see any equivalent to other than the "mad craze" within *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* (1971) for the "golden ticket" off-hand. Taking this all into account, it is right to give this movie a rating of 9 out of 10, with the trouble being everywhere in "paradise" of the wealth envelopes the character played by Kay Francis, you could say.

With that, this review, the 70th one of this film on IMDB, comes to a close.

Laughing with/at Hollyweird

For the Love of Mike: A funny movie but not as strong as others I have seen

Name of film: *For the Love of Mike*

Date film was first shown: 1932

Date reviewed: March 2, 2019

Rating: 8 out of 10

Tonight I watched this movie after trying to watch the 1927 silent film of the same name which is now lost to history as a "lost film." I didn't really know what to expect but it was still a funny British comedy film with slapstick humor and all. However, I think that Frank Capra's *The Strong Man*, while it is a silent film, is stronger and has a lot more going for it. This film has its absurdities and laughable moments but it really isn't funny all the way through.

I especially liked the fact that Bobby, the secretary to the wealthy man, and another friend whom he knew from the past, concocted a scheme at the end to steal the papers out of the safe, specifically those where the niece of his employer, whom he adores, signed away her legal rights to her money, and scatter all of the contents of the safe across the floor after Bobby could not close the safe. That was probably the funniest part of the film and anchored this comedy in a sort of reality. I would add however that other films I have watched are much stronger, apart from the Capra film I mentioned in the last paragraph, like the 1934 classic *It Happened One Night*, a sort of road movie or any of the main Monty Python films. I just don't think this movie holds together as well as those films in the end.

While saying this, I still think the movie is deserving of a rating of 8 stars out of 10 due to the effort taken in this comedy to make it strong and palatable.

Happy Accidents: Enjoyable comedy with social commentary

Name of film: *Happy Accidents*

Date film was first shown: 2000

Date reviewed: February 25, 2019

Rating: 8 out of 10

This was one of the most interesting movies about time travel I have seen yet. Sam Deed (Vincent D'Onofrio) tells a woman named Ruby Weaver (Marisa Tomei) that he is a "back" time traveler from the year 2470. Sometimes his story seems credible, but at other times you deeply question it because he doesn't really have much, if any, evidence he is from the future. At times he is being truthful but at others he is not. It is not until the end you realize he is right and that he is a time traveler. Apparently so was Ruby's therapist (Meg Ford, played by Holland Taylor). The reality that Sam is a time traveler is revealed by the fact that the accident that would have killed her is near the corner of Christine and DeLancey streets. Somehow, Sam is able to stop the accident. I'm not sure how but he saves her life and they are together then on.

As such, while this movie is a romance, it is more interesting than any of the time travel movies I have watched in recent days because the viewer is questioning themselves and what story is right.

If I had a chance I would definitely watch this again.

Click: A great comedy

Name of film: *Click*

Date film was first shown: 2006

Date reviewed: February 10, 2019

Rating: 10 out of 10

I'm not always an Adam Sandler fan but this movie is pretty funny. Basically he's a middle-class schlub who isn't getting ahead in life so he gets a universal remote to control his life. Things go well originally, as he rises up the ranks of the architecture firm. But then the remote goes on autopilot, making him miss years upon years of his life.

In the time between the skips he becomes an absolute jerk, not caring about anyone around him. While those in the actual time see him as a jerk, when he comes out of the lapses he is responding

perfectly rationally...but those in the actual time see it as weird or meaning he has mental problems. He goes through his whole life, his wife leaves him and re-marries, his kids get older, and he dies. It brings a tear to your eye even though there is a lot of laughs. Luckily "Morty" (a parody of Marty from *Back to the Future?*), an angel, gives him a second chance. He takes it, vowing to be better person, a more loving father, and the film closes.

There is more than what I have just mentioned. This movie sort of brings time travel up to the present, apart from being uncontrollable like in *The Time Traveler's Wife* (2009), from a car accident like in *Turn Back the Clock* (1933), or through self-hypnosis in *Somewhere in Time* (1980). At the same time, perhaps it is a bit too easy for it to be in a remote. Even so, I like this conception of time travel in the consumerist society of the US, as his annoyances could be felt by many. I can't remember any people of color in this film, so I'd venture to say it is a white man's fantasy since time travel movies in general usually involve white men traveling forward or backward in time, just as it happens in *Back to the Future* (1985) and *The Time Machine* (2002).

By the end of the film, I guess the lesson is to live your life, not skip around, and put family before your job? Not sure what the takeaway is at the end but this movie was definitely enjoyable.

***High Anxiety*: Not as funny as other Mel Brooks films but still good**

Name of film: *High Anxiety*

Date film was first shown: 1977

Date reviewed: February 2, 2019

Rating: 10 out of 10

Last night I watched this film again. It is a parody of a number of Alfred Hitchcock movies, like *Vertigo*, *Psycho*, *the Birds*, and *Spellbound*. In the process it ends up being a bit formulaic as it seems certain movies were just used as a checklist for this movie to check off. On the other hand, the jokes are strong at times and can be very funny. Mel Brooks (playing Dr. Richard Harpo Thorndyke) does a great job as the protagonist and Madeline Kahn (playing Victoria Brisbane) does well also. Harvey Korman

(playing Dr. Charles Montague) is good as always but Cloris Leachman (playing Nurse Charlotte Diesel) and Ron Carey (Brophy) are great in their supporting roles. The movie obviously does not paid psychology very positively as it shows it as sexist and a way to keep patients at the institute beyond their will. All in all, despite its problems, this is still one of the better Mel Brooks movies.

One paragraph reviewing this film does not do it justice. This comedy and drama is relatively effective not only through the acting of Brooks himself, along with Korman, Leachman, Carey, and Kahn, but in the situational comedy. Leachman is one of the best of the lot, with her character, perhaps a nod to the film two years earlier, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, as she is a very controlling nurse just like Nurse Ratched (played by Louise Fletcher) is in that film. The reason for Thorndyke's high anxiety is laughable and hilarious, adding to the comedy of the film, as does the antics of Brody with his "I got it" (as he strains to pick up the suitcase), followed by "I don't got it" as the suitcase drops to the ground, while Thorndyke effortlessly picks up the suitcase. The use of photographs to find out whom really killed a man in the hotel, as a person with a mask of his face shot someone while he was coming down the elevator is almost reminiscent of the 1966 English mystery and thriller film, *Blowup*, flouting the Hay Code, leading to its collapse in 1968. Dr. Philip Wentworth (played by Dick Van Patten) and being run off the road, then killed by loud music coming out of his stereo, not able to escape his car, may be seen now as a nod to *Silkwood*, but that film was actually not released until 1983!

All in all, while this movie is not as good as other Mel Brooks movies, which is why it is rated an 8 rather than a 9 or 10, it still holds together well, although it almost seems like he was trying to parody too many Hitchcock films.

The Meaning of Life: Funny, witty, satirical, and relevant

Name of film: *The Meaning of Life*²

² [Script of the movie](#) from a Monty Python fan site.

Date film was first shown: 1983

Date reviewed: January 24, 2019, updated on March 13, 2019 (currently the updated version is still under review by IMDB)

Rating: 10 out of 10

I watched this movie this morning after seeing it recommended on this site. The movie starts out with a short film, a separate feature called *The Crimson Permanent Assurance*, criticizing corporate America and the get-rich-quick scheme of climbing up the ladder to "strip out" other companies of their assets. Then that ends and the film goes into its feature presentation, beginning with a song about the meaning of life which is accompanied by Terry Gilliam's animations. The film from there consists of seven parts: "the miracle of birth", "growth and learning", "fighting each other", "middle age", "live organ transplants", "the autumn years", and "death" all as part of a way to tell the "meaning of life." This is interspersed with humor, satirizing Roman Catholicism with "Every Sperm is Sacred," Protestants (who never have sex), and "proper" British people (including the British officer class, bourgeois diners, and the teacher who "teaches" his students about sex by having sex on a bed installed in the classroom, lol). There is also the hilarious making fun of religion with absurdist reverence for god, the soldiers killed while giving their officer absurd gifts (a watch, a cake, a grandfather clock, a check), recognition of our place in the galactic cosmos, and the person who is killed by bare-chested ladies for making a sexist joke in a movie (analogous of conservatives angrily denouncing so-called "PC" culture today). While this film is not as funny as I would have liked, it still is a wonderful film on the whole with Monty Python pulling it through, especially Michael Palin, John Gleece, Graham Chapman, Eric Idle, and Terry Gilliam of course.

There is more than this, of course. For one, this film is in all senses an absurdist comedy. Just take the scene where the overweight man, Mr. Creosote eats and eats until he is so full that he explodes. This is, I have to admit, disgusting, but it is part of their absurdist comedy. This is due to the fact that right after that the cleaning lady (I believe played by Gilliam) says she never learned about the meaning

of life even though she worked at Academie Française, the library in the Prado in Madrid, the Library of Congress, the Bodleian Library, and the British Museum. Right after that, she says something anti-Jewish, saying "though I may be down right now, at least I don't work for Jews" to which the Maitre D apologizes ("I had no idea we had a-- a racist working here") to the cameraman, then the camera follows Gaston back to his childhood home (almost in a home movie/hand-held camera type of way), with him ultimately declaring that "I can live my own life in my own way if I want to," with the film moving onto its next section. The occasional interruptions of the movie with "the middle of the film" and "end of the film" segments, both which Michael Palin dressed up as a lady presenter, along with the fish which had each of their faces plastered onto it was also absurdist as well.

The film ends with Michael Palin saying that "try and be nice to people, avoid eating fat, read a good book every now and then, get some walking in, and try and live together in peace and harmony with people of all creeds and nations," saying that the censors should be annoyed and that all people want is "filth" and asking "Where's the fun in pictures?" From there, Eric Idle, in a pink suit, sings the Galaxy Song, saying that "Just remember that you're standing on a planet that's evolving...Our galaxy itself contains a hundred billion stars/It's a hundred thousand light years side to side...The universe itself keeps on expanding and expanding/In all of the directions it can whizz...So remember, when you're feeling very small and insecure/How amazingly unlikely is your birth/And pray that there's intelligent life somewhere up in space." And with that, my review of this film comes to an end.

That Certain Thing: Funny but also too weak for my taste

Name of film: *That Certain Thing*

Date film was first shown: 1928

Date reviewed: March 2, 2019

Rating: 7 out of 10

Like many comedies, this is a romantic comedy. Since it is by Frank Capra it has social commentary but not in the way you think. The protagonist, Molly Kelly (played by Viola Dana) wants

to get a millionaire to marry so she can move out of the tenement house she is living in with her mother and two children, among others. She gets that wish fulfilled when marrying the son of a restaurant millionaire, Andy Charles, Jr., played by Ralph Graves. Unfortunately, Andy's father, played by Burr McIntosh, disowns him for marrying her. As a result she leaves him as she was really in it just for the money, admitting she is a "golddigger." Despite being directly spurned, Andy sticks by her and eventually creates a booming box lunch business with Molly at the head and Andy as the bookkeeper. Andy's father ends up paying them \$100,000 for the business with a scheme between Molly and Andy to "soak him" of his money, and he ends up paying them an extra \$100,000 for Andy being married to Molly. So they both get off very well at the end.

I'm not sure what the social commentary of this movie is, however, other than that if you work your hardest you will get what you want, which isn't true. But I do like that they soak the rich father for money, which is totally justified. I give the film a 7 because it is relatively weak in its execution and is not as funny (despite the fact it is classified as a comedy) as other silent films, including another by Capra, named *The Strong Man*, which came out two years earlier.

The Crimson Permanent Assurance: Funny opening to "Monty Python's Meaning of Life"

Name of film: *The Crimson Permanent Assurance*

Date film was first shown: 1983

Date reviewed: January 28, 2019

Rating: 10 out of 10

This short film is an interesting opening to the *Meaning of Life*. It is critical of corporate power ("Very Big Corporation of America"), evident horrid workplace with the old workers fighting against the "suits" (corporate men), and asset stripping (what the old men do to companies in the world of high finance). But this ends quickly as being not "realistic" with the old men falling off the cliff in their building/ship. Later this comes up the *Meaning of Life* with the boat squashed as a distraction, saying that they need to end the "unwarranted attack by the supporting feature."

There is more to say about this short film. It was Terry Gilliam's fourth work he directed, after Monty Python and the Holy Grail (1975), which he co-directed with Terry Jones, Jaberwocky (1977), and Time Bandits (1981). Additionally, while this film included few of the original Monty Python crew, it still has a lasting impact. Like other Gilliam works, this was absurdist and silly, but it connected to common themes in other movies, like the characters bursting into song or a concept that seems laughable on its face. This film was also unique in that most of the cast were comprised of older individuals, which is usually not the case for most movies, which primarily comprise of those whom are younger, even if they are focused on the life of some older people.

Additionally, I'd like to add that this film, apart from giving a number of actors a platform they would have not otherwise had, is unique in that does not have the same tempo, rhythm, or length of The Meaning of Life. That makes it a curious introduction to the main film, but it also allows it to, in a sense, stand on its own, to say the least. With that, my review of this short film has come to a close.

Big News: A comedic talkie about the news business

Name of film: *Big News*

Date film was first shown: 1929

Date reviewed: March 8, 2019

Rating: 8 out of 10

Tonight as I was looking through what movie I would watch next, I picked this movie. I was unfamiliar with the cast of this film, with those playing the characters, Steve Banks (played by Robert Armstrong), Steve's wife and lady reporter (played by Carole Lombard), Hansel (played by Louis Payne), O'Neill (played by Wade Boteler), Addison (played by Charles Sellon), Reno (played by Sam Hardy), Ryan (played by Tom Kennedy), District Attorney Phelps (played by Warner Richmond), the society editor named Vera (played by Helen Ainsworth), Deke (played by James Donlan), reporter Hoffman (played by George "Gabby" Hayes), another reporter (played by Vernon Steele), the coroner (played by Clarence Wilson), Birn (played by Colin Chase), and the Telegraph editor (played by Robert

Dudley). This film started off a bit slow, with Steve Banks at the bottom, only protected by one of the editors, as the editor-in-chief (Addison), wanting to fire him. The gangster, Reno, wants Banks fired so he can continue the shady activities around his speakeasy. He gets his wish as he is fired for disrupting the paper's advertising revenue, with Reno as the advertiser and a gangster at the same time. Banks' wife says she will leave him, tired of his rough newspaper life which involves deep alcoholism, for justified reasons, so they are ready to divorce.

Banks and his continuously drunk reporter friend O'Neill, I believe, go to Reno's speakeasy with Banks bluffing he has a confession of crimes Reno and his ilk have engaged in, from the mouth of a woman whom has been imprisoned. This shocks Reno and he tells his henchmen to kill her, shut her up. But Banks, despite being fired, still wants to get a story. He gets the confession alright and brings it to the editor-in-chief while Reno stays in the room of another editor, saying he is discussing advertising. But this is suspicious. Soon the second and last part of the movie goes into motion.

The police and then the district attorney accuse Banks of killing the editor-in-chief, bringing together flimsy evidence, like the fact he was supposedly the last person talking to this editor, a cut natural gas line and a knife he left at the bar of Reno's speakeasy. Banks' wife, however, comes to his defense while others are skeptical but Banks convinces them that Reno actually killed the editor (who died not from asphyxiation but from a blow to the head, which disqualifies him from murder already) and destroyed the confession in order to protect his criminal activities. The film ends with Reno in handcuffs and Banks working on the paper again.

This film didn't have the social commentary which similar films, those by Frank Capra, have but it does have something going for it, the fact that it is an effective drama and comedy. The quips by characters made me laugh as many times as I would laugh for a Mel Brooks film. The occasional racist wording like "Chinaman" was off-putting and the slowness of the movie made it less enjoyable. However I would still rate this film as an 8 out of 10. With that my review of this film concludes.

Jaberwocky: An absurdist comedy for the ages

Name of film: *Jaberwocky*

Date film was first shown: 1977

Date reviewed: March 11, 2019

Rating: 9 out of 10

Over the past couple days I watched this film after quickly abandoning *Time Bandits*. I wasn't sure what to expect after seeing Terry Gilliam's lackluster and problematic magical fable, *The Fisher King*. After watching *Mary, Queen of Scots*, the recent *Hollyweird* film, this absurdist comedy was a great antidote, from the father of Dennis Cooper (played by Michael Palin) harshly criticizing his son/disowning him from his death bed to Cooper walking in on the fully naked Princess (Deborah Faller). At the same time this film, unlike most *Hollyweird* films of royalty, shows an incompetent/doddering King (played by Max Well) who cares little for his subjects, even letting a majority of his knights die in a huge tournament to determine a champion to fight the "beast," the *Jaberwocky*.

Dennis is a cooper's apprentice but he easily disappoints his father and loves a local girl, Griselda Fishfinger (played Annette Badland) although she does not return his affection, throwing him a turnip which he keeps as a memento. After the death of his father, he goes on a journey that leads him to the castle of the King, King Bruno the Questionable, with this magical fable mostly set within the castle walls. In the process, he meets a fellow cooper who cut off his foot so people will give him money, with the joke continued later as he has now cut off both of his feet! The kingdom is clearly relatively dysfunctional, unlike kingdoms that are usually portrayed by *Hollyweird*.

The film also pokes at the common fairytale stories with Dennis meeting the princess, whom is originally naked but then quickly clothed, by accident. She has romantic visions about him and the battles he has fought even though he is actually a country bumpkin of sorts, with a brave man who had ventured to her tower falling to his death while Dennis is there. Additionally, when, the *Jaberwocky* is

killed, it is literally done by accident. Furthermore, when Dennis is greeted as a hero, the King grants him half of the kingdom and says he will marry the Princess which he does not want. Instead he wants to marry Gabriella, whom has come to like him now due to his new hero status. The film ends with that, poking at the common Hollyweird idea of "happy endings."

Even organized religion is seen as absurd. Just the bishop, after such pomp and circumstance, who throws a pinch of holy water on the "victor" whom will fight the Jaberwocky. This is the same person who has to be awakened by water thrown on him, as he is carried by people whom are whipped by their masters, like other "important" people in castle. Also take when the common people see Dennis as an incarnation of the devil because he is wearing the robes of a nun.

All in all, this film was relatively enjoyable, which is why I rated it 9 out of 10, and I would definitely recommend it. With that, my review comes to a close.

The Simpsons Movie: Witty and funny, harkens back to Golden Age of The Simpsons

Name of film: *The Simpsons Movie*

Date film was first shown: 2007

Date reviewed: March 12, 2019

Rating: 8 out of 10

I recently watched this movie again as I was looking to fill up some time. While I've watched this movie, directed by David Silverman, probably 5 or 6 times before, it was still enjoyable. It features the common voice actors, Dan Castellaneta (voicing Homer Simpson, Abe Simpson, Krusty the Clown, Groundskeeper Willie, Mayor Quimby, Sideshow Mel, Mr. Teeny, an EPA officer, Itchy, and Barney Gumble), Julie Kavner (voicing Marge Simpson, Selma Bouvier, and Patty Bouvier), Nancy Cartwright (voicing Bart Simpson, Ralph Wiggum, Todd Flanders, and Nelson Muntz), Yeardley Smith (voicing Lisa Simpson), Hank Azaria (voicing Moe Szyslak, Chief Wiggum, Cletus Spuckler, Professor Frink, Apu Nahasapeemapetilon, Lou, Comic Book Guy, Captain McCallister, Bumblebee Man, and Dr. Nick), Henry Shearer (voicing Mr. Burns, Smithers, Ned Flanders, Reverend Lovejoy, Lenny, President

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Seymour Skinner, Kent Brockman, Dr. Hibbert, and Otto Mann), Pamela Hayden (voicing Milhouse Van Houten, Rod Flanders, and Jimbo Jones), and Tress MacNeille (voicing the Medicine Woman, Agnes Skinner, Crazy Cat Lady, Colin, and Cookie Kwan). Additionally, long time Simpsons producer Albert Brooks whom is voicing the "mad with power" (as a fellow EPA worker tells him at one point) head of the EPA, Russ Cargill. I know some reviews of this film go down to even 2 stars, I'm rating this film 8 stars and I'll fully and completely explain why.

For one, while this film has annoying elements, like Lisa having a sort of boyfriend (an Irish boy named Colin, whom is also passionate about the environment), if it can make you laugh, then it is a victory. The film features Lisa, as the heart of the show, leading the charge to clean up Lake Springfield which is polluted by everyone in the town, which is sanctioned by Mayor Quimby who declares "code black." However, Homer, as you would think, is utterly impulsive, slowly fulfilling the prophecy that Grampa Simpson tells the shocked churchgoers (seemingly comprising most of the town of Springfield), after dumping the waste of a pig he adopted in the lake because he wanted to eat donuts. As a result, the EPA, led by a corporate hatchet man, Russ Cargill, quarantines the town in a dome to "contain" its pollution, which is sanctioned by President Schwarzenegger (which should have been Ranier Wolfcastle/McBain instead, as this ruins this longstanding Simpsons parody) in a glass dome, trapping the citizenry.

Soon, the Simpsons family (Maggie, Marge, Homer, Lisa, and Bart) are targeted by a torch-wielding "mob" comprising all of those in the town. Even Colin is in the "mob," although it is hard to say if he is there willingly or happened to be there. In fact, they would have gone to the wrong house had Homer not pointed out they were going the wrong direction. They escape the town thanks to a sinkhole, yet the town "mob" dumbly doesn't follow them while the Simpsons house is quickly destroyed by the sinkhole, apparently. From there, the Simpsons family is on the run from the EPA, which can't manage to track them when they go from Springfield to Alaska, which includes crossing

international borders (the Canada-U.S. border two times). If we suspend belief, this narrative is otherwise compelling.

Meanwhile, Springfield has descended into "utter anarchy" in this dystopia. Soon, Homer selfishly wants to stay in Alaska, their new home, but Marge and the rest of the family go back to Springfield. It is here there is a hilarious criticism of the NSA as utterly incompetent, with the one analyst shouting "we finally found someone we are looking for!" Keep in mind this is before the Snowden revelations, showing that the concern for mass surveillance is nothing new to say the least. Another criticism I liked was of how Homer describes the fellow church people, saying that these pious people believe in their "phony, baloney god," knowing they will hear him, while publicly he puts on a face that he cares. This raises the question of how religious Homer is, after all, if it's all just a front of some sort. It reminds me a bit of *The Miracle Woman* (1931) by Frank Capra, especially of the beginning scene when Florence Fallon (played by Barbara Stanwyck) condemns her fellow churchgoers as hypocrites and liars, although she was much more forceful. The criticism of the rich is evident, with Mr. Burns saying at one point that "finally, the rich white man is in charge" (or something to that effect) when Dr. Hibbert, Apu, and Chief Wiggum ask for power to be supplied to the city, which he doesn't do. Clearly, Mr. Burns is representative of the evil capitalist, as he, in a credits scene, and has a dark side, as he is fine with watching someone commit suicide!

I'm not sure, personally about the depiction of indigenous people in this movie, represented specifically medicine woman, as it makes me feel a bit uncomfortable in that it seems to feed into a stereotype. But perhaps that's no surprise as Apu himself is a stereotype, even more so than the medicine woman. Even with that being said, I liked the fan service of the motorcycle, with Homer and Bart above it, jumping over the Springfield gorge, over which Homer and Bart had failed in their attempts to get across it in the past, and getting across thanks to Bart's slingshot.

While I have my reservations about this movie, especially wondering if this movie can be considered canon since it would mean that any episodes after this movie could get awkward since the

house was utterly destroyed, as were their possessions, I would say that it is generally enjoyable and I would recommend it. If this movie is not canon, it would make sense because it would explain what happened to people like Russ Cargill, the President, Colin, and other characters just for this movie. I understand the criticisms of this movie, but I just have to disagree with them, as I've stated here. With that, my review of this film comes to a close.

Bender's Game: A funny film which is more than a story of a "fantasy world."

Name of film: *Bender's Game*

Date film was first shown: 2008

Date reviewed: March 24, 2019

Rating: 8 out of 10

One line describes this film here on IMDB: "The Planet Express crew get trapped in a fantasy world" but there is much more to this movie than that. In this direct-to-video movie, which loosely falls after the end of *The Beast with A Billion Backs*, Leela (voiced by Katey Sagal), Fry (voiced by Billy West), Bender (voiced by John DiMaggio), Farnsworth (voiced by Billy West), Zoidberg (voiced by Billy West), Amy Wong (voiced by Lauren Tom), and Hermes (voiced by Phil LaMarr) reprise their roles, joined by Nibbler (voiced by Frank Welker). Absent is any role for "Rear Brigadier" Zapp Brannigan (voiced by Billy West) or Amy's husband Kif (voiced by Maurice LaMarche), although Dr. Wernstrom (voiced by David Herman) and Mom (voiced by Tress MacNeille) make an appearance.

The plot of this movie is simple. Mom, head of a huge mega-conglomerate, wants to control all the dark matter, which is literally fecal matter from animals like Nibbler, claiming there is a "shortage" so she can jack up the price. Leela, after being challenged by a "bunch of rednecks" enters a demolition derby, which she wins but results in extreme damage to the ship. There is a funny cameo of George Takei and Rich Little, with both flying in ships resembling the enterprise from Star Trek, with Takei accusing Rich of "ruining the franchise," with both ships ultimately exploding. As a result of her "anger

issues" a shock collar is put on Leela, which is triggered anytime she thinks of violence, "perversions of a sexual nature," or curse words.

As Leela tries to figure out why she is angry, another sub-plot develops: Bender becoming more enveloped with Dungeons and Dragons, so much so that he believes he is Titanius Anglesmith of the imaginary land of Cornwood after playing the game with Cubert (voiced by Kath Soucie), Dwight (voiced by Phil LaMarr), and some of their other friends. Bender is, as such, sent to the Hal Institute for Criminally Insane Robots, which made me chuckle a little bit as Hal from Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* was clearly "insane." There he is examined in an environment, which somewhat resembles *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975) in that there is a robot named "Nurse Ratched" (voiced by Tress MacNeille), where he is subjected to hammer-therapy and examined by Dr. Perceptron (voiced by Maurice LaMarche). It is here we see one of the funnest characters of the film, whom always says the most outrageous things: Roberto (voiced by David Herman), whom was created by people in Mexico who aimed to "create an insane robot." More than anyone else, he definitely finds comic relief.

As Leela never really finds what causes her anger, other than her justified hatred of Zoidberg, the main plot of Mom's hoarding of dark matter in a "crap factory" of Nibblonians, and Bender's fantasy land of Cornwood are merged, when the resonance of the dark matter in Bender's mind creates this fantasy land as a reality, with Mom and her sons, Igner (voiced by John DiMaggio), Walt (voiced by Maurice LaMarche), and Larry (voiced by David Herman), along with the rest of the Planet Express crew. What follows is an obvious parody/homage of the Lord of the Rings trilogy, with the centaurs whom believe in not fighting to be considered "wimps." Soon this ends with Mom holding onto the anti-backward crystal, beating them in that world and bringing them back to the regular world. However, the regular crystal that makes dark matter potent and the anti-backward crystal are brought together, making all dark matter useless. The solution? "Nibbler power" as Farnsworth calls it.

At the closing of this film I have a number of questions. For one, can this film really be truly considered canon? After all, the 2003 episode The Why of Fry (Season 4, episode 10) shows all the Nibblonians living quite well on a planet with all the food they would eat. However, this movie makes it seem that all the Nibblonians were captured and taken in by Mom, whom was previously a Doop contractor whom "mined" the planet hollow for dark matter. This creates a bit of a contradiction. However, perhaps it could fit into the canon of the show, although some gymnastics would be required. If that is the case, it would explain, partially, the rivalry Farnsworth has with Wernstrom as he was Mom's ex-husband, expressed throughout the series and in the last film, *The Beast with A Billion Backs*.

Even with these problems, the film still has some good themes. It criticizes corporate concentration, specifically monopolies controlling resources, and also shows the media as colluding with those very people, as one would expect. In this way, you could say the film is critical of capitalism. This is proven with the hilarious scene of an ad shown to Frydo (the version of Fry in Cornwood) to buy a knife for a limited time only so he can kill his friends. With this all being said, I give this film not a lowly rating of 3 or even a 9, the highest rating of the 39 reviews of this film on IMDB, going in-between with an 8. With that, my review of this film comes to a close.

The superhero genre strikes again!

Doctor Strange: Interesting beginning, horrible last half

Name of film: *Doctor Strange*

Date film was first shown: 2016

Date reviewed: January 14, 2019

Rating: 3 out of 10

While I am generally tired of Benedict Cumberbabe (as I like to call him), whom plays as the protagonist (Doctor Strange) I was willing to give this movie a try. I liked the beginning meditative part

in the mountains where he is beginning to recognize his powers. But then, like all superhero movies these days it became a big battle scene. It gets so complex I have no idea what is happening (I felt the same about the 2013 film *Star Trek Into Darkness*), who is firing what weapon and what I am watching. For that reason this movie fails big-time.

There's more to justify a rating of 3 out of 10 is needed. For one, it is interesting that Strange studies to learn more knowledge, including from ancient books within a library and the bending of nature's rules. But again, it is like a battle of elite superwarriors, like is the case for every superhero movie. What is the case for the masses? Are they supposed to be saved by these superwarriors? Perhaps they should pay for the damage they caused, like was suggested in one of the superhero movies (I can't remember which one). As one site, tvropes, [notes](#), heroes never get in trouble for destruction or crimes "as long as they're being heroic."

With that, I don't have anything else to say about this film, and this movie review has come to a close.

***Wonder Woman*: Interesting concepts but overall a terrible movie**

Name of film: *Wonder Woman*

Date film was first shown: 2017

Date reviewed: January 14, 2019

Rating: 3 out of 10

While I was wary of this movie based on the fact that the female protagonist (Gal Gadot, playing Diana Prince/Wonder Woman) was a former IDF soldier in real life, due to my recognition of the horrors they have inflicted on Palestinians, I was willing to give this movie a chance. Sure, it was interesting to have a class of woman superfighters. But, it ultimately just ended up as a big fight scene which reminds me of how much I hated the 2009 *Star Trek* movie (and the one after it) for the same reason. I would never recommend this movie to anyone in the right mind. Watch a comedy instead!

Some have easily praised the role of Gadot and said the film was "feminist" because it featured a woman as the protagonist. But, she has a male love interest (Steve Trevor, played by Chris Pine). This film, despite being set in a war zone does not attempt, from what I remember to be seriously anti-war, although it brings up the "science can be evil" theme, of course, with Isabel Maru, also known as Doctor Poison, played by Elena Anaya, as one of the villains. Some will say that this film has, within it, themes of the preservation of information. However, this doesn't take away from the overall odious nature of this film.

In the end, I still think this film deserves a rating of 3 out of 10.

The Avengers: Another annoying superhero movie

Name of film: *The Avengers*

Date film was first shown: 2012

Date reviewed: January 14, 2019

Rating: 2 out of 10

While I rated *Ant-Man* and its sequel, along with *Deadpool*, well, this movie was not great. Like most movies of this genre it was just a big fight scene and scenes of people using their powers, interspersed with the glorifying of the US military. I would never, in a million years watch this movie again.

There is more to say on this film, however. I don't like this film for the same reasons that I don't like the 2009 Star Trek movie: it just ends up being one big battle scene and you don't know what is happening or with whom, becoming extremely hard to follow. I don't mind sci-fi films or those with battles, but it needs to be something organized where you can understand what is happening rather than not, as that lessens the enjoyment of watching movies such as this. Perhaps I am also negative about this film as I generally do not like superhero movies as they seem a bit too elitist for my taste, which is why I like films like *Deadpool* or *Deadpool 2* which lampoon this absurdity directly.

I'd like to end by saying that this film will obviously be liked by many and probably did swell in the box office, so in these opinions I am likely in the minority, but that is fine as I am wholly principled about my opinions on this film.

Ant-Man and the Wasp: Perhaps even better than Ant Man (2015)

Name of film: *Ant-Man and the Wasp*

Date film was first shown: 2018

Date reviewed: January 14, 2019

Rating: 7 out of 10

This movie was, like the first *Ant-Man*, a bit funny but did not subvert the superhero genre. Paul Rudd (as Ant Man) and Evangeline Lilly (as Hope/Wasp) play a great role carrying the movie along. They are the driving force of the movie. Michael Luis, along with his two compatriots, are a bit of bumbling fools, once again. They are supposed to be comic relief but it doesn't work. There were cool effects like making their lab small and all, and the character of "Ghost" as well. This movie, more than the others, directly ties into the Marvel Universe (especially in the post-credits scene), making you want to watch other superhero movies in theory.

There is more than this. The superheroes in this movie are a bit like Iron Man or Batman in that they do not have superpowers but just gadgets, but are treated on the same level as others. I am reminded of Gil Scott-Heron's *Ain't No Such Thing As Superman*, where he sings that "Yes so tell me why/Can't you understand that there ain't no such thing as a superman?/ There ain't no such thing as a superman...You alone consider mercy after it seems like all you get is pain/It seem to me that you have found the courage that others could not find/You alone have the wisdom to take this world and make it what it need to be, want to be, will be, someday you'll see/The day, the day you understand/That there ain't no such thing as a superman/There ain't no such thing as a superman." That brings us back to this film in that the technology they use is basically being hoarded, not shared with the world, just like

T'Challa did not want to share the discoveries made with his magical technology with the world, which has a disgusting, elitist tenor to it. So that perhaps is one of the most disturbing parts of this movie.

In the end, I would probably not watch this movie again either but it was a bit fun, although annoying in how much it ties into the genre.

Ant-Man: Superhero movie but not like the others

Name of film: *Ant-Man*

Date film was first shown: 2015

Date reviewed: January 14, 2019

Rating: 5 out of 10

Ant-Man is a bit of a different movie than others I have seen. Sure, it is not like Deadpool, but it does have an interesting aspect: a superhero who does not have superpowers, a bit like Batman & Robin, Iron Man, or Spider Man who each depend on their gadgets but have no superpowers of their own. In that way, this movie sorta reminded me of *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids*. Still, it does not subvert the superhero genre but carefully stays inside of it, even tying to the Avengers, even though commanding ants with gadgets is kinda cool. The movie did not have the strongest plot though, with the typical "good guys" and "bad guys" who worked on a government project, and it could have been more developed. For instance, at one point Michael Douglas breaks out of the lab with a big tank, and the helicopter with Corey Stoll and his henchmen. I don't understand why the tank doesn't fire at the helicopter, blowing it up, killing Stoll, rather than Paul Rudd as Ant Man leading the ants to attack. But, plots of these movies don't always make sense.

So this wasn't the worst movie I saw, but if it was between this and other superhero movies (apart from Deadpool), I would recommend this one. Paul Rudd does a good portrayal as Ant-Man and Michael Douglas (as Hank Pym) is always good. While Evangeline Lilly as Hope is good, as is Bobby Cannavale as Paxto, among others, Michael Pina as Luis is annoying. I know he is supposed to be comic relief but he is more annoying than anything else.

With all that is why I rate this film 5 stars.

Deadpool: Not the typical superhero film

Name of film: *Deadpool*

Date film was first shown: 2016

Date reviewed: January 14, 2019

Rating: 7 out of 10

After watching superhero movies like *Ant-man* and *Ant-Man and Wasp* recently, along with *Iron Man*, *X-Man*, and others in the past, this movie stands apart. You may ask how. Well for one, the protagonist Deadpool is the narrator and he refuses to be classified as a superhero, seeing himself as more of a bad guy fighting other bad guys. So in that way, perhaps the film does subvert the superhero genre. Perhaps it's funny as well. Still, like every superhero movie, it connects to the others (apparently more so in *Deadpool 2*), creating a Marvel Universe web, bringing more money in for Hollywood producers.

This movie does tie into the *X-Man* movies, but it also has its own style. I think it effectively uses the tactic of talking to the camera, which doesn't always work in these movies, but it does work here. The playful nature of this movie, which is still relatively violent, should make it no surprise that this film did relatively well at the box office. You could also say that this film is part of an anti-hero superhero movie brand and that is probably accurate as well, but it does not pull away from the nature of this movie as a whole.

All in all, this is a fun movie. I don't think I would watch it again, but it was a nice break from other movies, especially typical superhero movies, nonetheless.

Deadpool 2: Funny, parody of superhero genre

Name of film: *Deadpool 2*

Date film was first shown: 2018

Date reviewed: February 17, 2019

Rating: 10 out of 10

After watching a set of superhero movies this one subverts those movies. Deadpool is the anti-hero and the movie follows a standard Hollywood storyline while also being generally funny with a good amount of breaking the fourth wall to the audience. There is an easy connection to other Marvel movies, but there is also a mocking of the X-Men for having a sexist name, smashing of racism (of Josh Brolin's character), and such. But we should recognize this is becoming the model and is earning Hollywood execs the big bucks, in the millions of dollars. Still, this movie is good, with the Indian taxi driver, Dopinder, even having a role in the bloodshed. They do such nutty stuff, subverting the happy-good-lucky sentiment of general movies.

There is much more to say, however. In this superhero film, Ryan Reynolds reprises his role as Deadpool, making this movie generally enjoyable, as he seriously pokes at the superhero genre. In a different way, the long and unwieldy film, *Watchmen* (2009) does something similar, although it is far more depressing in that millions of people have to be killed (apparently) to bring "peace" and save billions. I especially like the drop sequence of this film where almost all of Deadpool's team are killed in one way or another, when in most movies they would have survived, along with his constant ribbing of the X-Men for their issues, declaring that his team are "X-Force" which is kinda funny.

With that, I don't think I have anything else to say about this film and this review has clearly come to a close.

Trash/weird/other films

Back to the Future: Capitalist hegemony and time travel for white racists

Name of film: *Back to the Future*

Date film was first shown: 1985

Date reviewed: October 15, 2018

Rating: N/A, review taken from “[The “Great White Hope” and the spread of U\\$ capitalist hegemony](#)” post on the Leftist Critic blog.

Some recent films I have watched directly enforce this hegemony. The first one I will cover is the cult classic, [Back to the Future](#), a 1985 sci-fi film directed by [Robert Zemeckis](#), a Chicago-born White male who came to be known as a person who was “well attuned to the nuances of framing and camera movement...fluent and innovative in the visual language of the movies” or what IMDB calls a “[whiz kid with special effects](#).” [1] However, Zemeckis would not be the “organic” intellectual, but rather the movie’s producer, Steven Spielberg would serve this role, although Zemeckis would later end up in this role as he was also a producer during his career, along with being a writer and editor at other points. The movie’s plot is simple: Marty McFly (played by Michael J. Fox) is a White male 17-year-old who doesn’t care about high school, with the strict school administrator, Mr. Strickland (played by James Tolkan), hating his guts. He accidentally gets sent thirty years into the past in a time-traveling DeLorean invented by his friend, “mad scientist” Doc. Emmett Brown (played by Christopher Lloyd), a White guy [who kinda looks like](#) Bernie Sanders. The movie is racist almost from the start: the uranium Doc. Brown bought for his time machine is from “Libyan terrorists” whom he paints as a bunch of goofs, but shoot him down in front of Marty, in a mall. Later, when Marty travels back to 1985, after succeeding in his time traveling mission, the Libyans crash their minivan into a shack, which lights up in flames, killing both “Libyan terrorists.” This is talked about by the late Jack Shaheen (of Lebanese descent) in his wonderful book, [Reel Bad Arabs](#), which was later turned into [a short film](#). While I don’t remember exactly what he wrote in his entry for the movie, as I don’t have the book in front of me, I do remember him talking about this main racist element in the movie. The dumb thing about this early onset racism in the movie as there is nothing which necessitates the “terrorists” be Libyan. They could have been angry, White men, just as easily! But, the producers and writers decided they should be Libyan, possibly because they were painted as “terrorists of the week” by the media, but also shows their inherent racism within their thinking.

This is compounded by the setting of the movie itself: a literal White person's fantasy. There is only one prominent Black person in the whole film, Goldie Wilson, played by Donald Fullilove. [2] Everyone else is White, literally. When Marty goes back to 1955, it is worse: Goldie, who was the town's mayor in 1985, is a janitor in a restaurant, ordered around by an angry White boss. Every other character is White. Basically, this means that Goldie is a token individual, made to make you think the town is diverse, when it is not at all, and is presumably in the Midwest. Not surprisingly, the audience is obviously supposed to sympathize with Marty, a sort of "down and out" individual who is middle-class, who is portrayed as "cool" for riding a skateboard (and fashioning one in 1955), and playing an electric guitar. The rest of the movie goes on with Marty bringing his parents back together and the "bad" White guy, Biff (played by Thomas F. Wilson) becoming a literal servant to Marty's parents, who are much better off, in changed 1985. Women in the film are basically second fiddles to the men, either trying to woo them (or fall in love with). Lorraine, Marty's mother (played by Lea Thompson) tries to do this when flirting with Marty after he messes with the timeline of his parent's first meeting. Other women are apparently interested in "bad boys" like Marty's girlfriend, Jennifer (played by Claudia Wells), in 1985, or are just in the background. Basically, the film is a White male fantasy, plain and simple, almost nostalgic of the 1950s and arguably sexist in how it plays out, as women don't seem to have any strong will, just succumbing to men. Is there any surprise that Ronald Raygun (as Gil Scott-Heron calls it), [loved the movie](#), especially after the [joke referring to him by Doc. Brown](#), and incorporated a nonsensical line from the movie into his 1986 State of the Union Address? I have a fondness for time travel, and that part of the movie is interesting, which may be part of the reason I like *Futurama*, the time-traveling episodes of *The Simpsons*, and other shows. Still, this does not distract from this movie's message: a nostalgia for a repressive time, the 1950s, as a part of a White male adventure of absurdist proportions. After watching a series of videos on YouTube, along with the parodies of *Back to the Future* by *Family Guy* and *American Dad*, I see no reason to watch the other two movies in the series, which plan to be even dumber, and be, like this one, over-hyped. As Black

hip-hop group Public Enemy says in their 1988 hit song, [Don't Believe the Hype](#), although they are talking about lies about Black people in the media.

Forrest Gump: A white male sexist fantasy

Name of film: *Forrest Gump*

Date film was first shown: 1994

Date reviewed: October 15, 2018

Rating: N/A, review taken from "[The "Great White Hope" and the spread of U\\$ capitalist hegemony](#)" post on the Leftist Critic blog.

Now, onto [Forrest Gump](#), a 1994 film which was also directed by Zemeckis, but produced by Wendy Finerman (a White Jewish woman), Steve Tisch (a White Jewish man), and Steve Starkey (a White man [who often produces](#) Zemeckis's movies). Like *Back to the Future*, this is also "Great White Hope," meaning that it is a White male fantasy. The movie follows one major character, Forrest Gump (played by Tom Hanks), a middle-class White boy born in Louisiana, who tested below the IQ level, only getting into a public school after pleading by his mother (played by Sally Field). There is undoubted racism flowing through parts of the movie, like the fact that Forrest was named after Gen. Bedford Forrest, one of the founders of the KKK. As for Forrest, he ends up going to college on a football scholarship at University of Alabama, then enlists in the Army in 1963, fighting in Vietnam before he is wounded and goes back home. Despite the previously mentioned bout of racism, Forrest does, while in the Army, become friends with Bubba Blue (played by Mykelti Williamson), a Black man who can apparently talk about nothing but shrimp, and dying in Vietnam. Forrest later forms a shrimping company with his former commander from Vietnam, Lt. Dan Taylor (played by Gary Sinese). On the one hand, the movie has the positive of criticizing the horrible IQ test, saying that it is not bad to be weird, and points to the physical horrors U\$ soldiers who fought in Vietnam had to endure once home (evidenced by Lt. Dan, who is crippled and in a wheelchair). However, apart from the absurd putting of Forrest Gump into archival footage to make it seem like he was there, which takes

up a number of scenes in the movie where he meets with at varied Presidents (such as Kennedy and Nixon), talk show hosts, and others. This is compounded by the ridiculous idea that Elvis got his moves from Forrest or that Forrest unintentionally revealed the Watergate scandal. Apart from this, there are a number of other problems.

For one, the movie has what I'll call a Male Savior Complex. What I mean is that Forrest works to "save" Jenny Curran (played by Robin Wright), with Jenny seeming to be wild and out of control, having a rough life, while Forrest does well, going from being a football star (in college) to an Army Brat, then a ping-pong player, and the head of a shrimping business. Basically, Forrest goes from being middle-class to becoming a millionaire (after investing in Apple Computer), meaning that he is a capitalist by the end of the movie, who is also a "good" philanthropist. While Jenny resists him for much of the movie, leading her own life, she eventually gives up and marries him, perhaps symbolic of the "self-made" man (Forrest) triumphing over the "excesses" of the 1960s (Jenny). Clearly this shows that the film is sexist, falling into line with patriarchal and traditionalist values. Forrest basically preys on Jenny for much of the movie, trying to get her to "love him," and that apparently works by the end, a disgusting turn of events. The film tries to get you to sympathize with former creep and rule follower Forrest, a White straight man who is strongly traditionalist in his action (and thinking), after Jenny dies, perhaps because she was "conquered" (as opposed to the dynamic in the Oliver Goldsmith's play, [*She Stoops to Conquer*](#)), leaving Forrest and his son remaining.

There are a number of other problematic elements. While the movie shows the horror of the Vietnam war in that it is bloody and brutal, it does not seem to take an antiwar position like [*Apocalypse Now*](#), [*Thin Red Line*](#), [*Catch-22*](#), [*Full Metal Jacket*](#) (in a unique way), [*Gallipoli*](#) (antiwar to an extent), and [*Platoon*](#), to give a few examples. Also Forrest is completely obedient of all orders while in the Army, which Lt. Dan himself makes fun of after the war is over, and seems to genuinely love the US capitalist system, never taking any efforts to resist it whatsoever. There are other elements of the movie which I have not mentioned here, but the general idea put forward is that anyone can make it in

the U\$, even though this idea is utterly false since class mobility doesn't really exist within the U\$. As I said earlier, this a Great White Hope. What I mean is that it does not offer a diverse world as one that is held up as a positive. For a movie that is famous for phrases like "Run, Forrest Run!" and "Life is like a box of chocolates, you don't know what you'll get," it is important to recognize its clear reactionary streak. This should be obvious to anyone as apart from the racism in certain parts, strong sexism, and nationalism, the peace movement is made fun of as an utter joke where people don't know what they are saying. When Forrest speaks in front of them in a rally, he is still treated like a good symbol even though he is wearing his uniform with a Medal of Honor. This even turns Jenny, then a peacenik, on, for some reason, which doesn't make much sense. Even worse is the scene about the Black Panther Party (BPP), which are treated as a bunch of male chauvinists who condone men hitting women to "discipline" them. There was undoubted problems with sexism within the BPP, but they did work to counter this, and stand against abuse of women, so the scene of him encountering a bunch of angry Black nationalists is an utter joke without question. That's all I can remember for now. But, the movie is pretty terrible for all the reasons I have explained. As such, *Forrest Gump* undoubtedly spreads the capitalist ideology, yet more evidence of cultural hegemony.

Such sexism in the *Forrest Gump* and *Back to the Future* is not unique. Just take songs by the Beach Boys as one example. Sure, you could say some of them have good beats, but many are about a male urge for a new (or maintained) romantic relationship with girls like as exemplified in their songs "Wouldn't It Be Nice," "Don't Worry Baby," "Good Vibrations," "Barbara Ann," "Kokomo," "I get around," "God Only Knows," and "Surfer Girls." Also, the idea of a monogamous marriage is reinforced in some of those songs. In this, you could say the sexism is integrated into the songs in that it is all about male urge for something which, if woman don't reciprocate as they are "supposed to" (by societal standards), it will lead to male anger, although that is not expressed in their songs. You could say this male urge is also sprinkled throughout early songs of The Beatles as well, while their later songs were more diverse in topics.

Black Panther: Terrible counterrevolutionary film

Name of film: *Black Panther*

Date film was first shown: 2018

Date reviewed: January 14, 2019

Rating: 3 out of 10

I may be in the minority of critics on this movie, but it was a terrible movie. As you can see from my other reviews on here, there are certain superhero movies I like. But this was not one of them.

The main reason is its obvious counterrevolutionary message. The Killmonger wants to use the energy of Wakanda to spread revolution across the world, but T'Challa wants none of that so he literally allies with a white CIA movie to bring him down in what can be described as a bloody coup d'etat. The population of Wakanda are not important in this struggle among the ruling classes, and like in most coups, T'Challa gains power (after losing it to Killmonger in a pitched battle, leading him to come to power in a binding manner by their own traditions and not in a coup) in a bloody manner. You can cite the "feminism" of this movie or that it reflects on previous African history of kingdoms before European conquest. However, those women fighters are part of an elite royal class. Wakanda is not, in any way, shape or form a democracy. It is a monarchy protected by force and weird traditions (especially those that are hereditary). This film is filled with stereotypes of Black people including the poor "helpless" ones of Oakland, or the "bad" revolutionaries who actually want to do good.

For all the movies that have come out in recent years like *Selma*, *Marshall*, *Blackkkklansman* (perhaps) and *Sorry to Bother You*, this movie falls short. I understand why people were drawn to see it, since it is the only major movie with Black superheroes, but it really was a lot of hype for not much of a result.

Of course like all other Marvel movies, thus ties into the broader Marvel Universe so white Hollywood producers can get more money. In this case it is worse than with other superhero movies due to this racial aspect.

I will not and will never recommend people watch this movie.

Black Panther: Counter-revolutionary trash

Name of film: *Black Panther*

Date film was first shown: 2018

Date reviewed: October 15, 2018

Rating: N/A, review taken from “[The “Great White Hope” and the spread of U\\$ capitalist hegemony](#)” post on the Leftist Critic blog.

A discussion of *Sorry to Bother You* connects to two other films this year which prominently feature Black characters: [Black Panther](#) and [Blackkklansman](#). The first film has been broadly [seen](#) by Black people as a positive and praised as being “progressive.” If we count up the amount of money [needed](#) to produce the film (\$200 million) plus that which it cost to market it (\$150 million), especially in the U\$ but also in “[certain western Euro markets](#) like Italy, Spain, Germany, and over in Japan,” the film made a total 384% profit, considering that it grossed over [\\$1.3 billion worldwide](#). Now, this film, has been praised as having “a story that has far more going for it than branding” with “groovy women and Afrofuturist flourishes,” “[the first film](#) in the Marvel cinematic universe to center on a superhero of color,” a movie with “a proud Afrocentric twist, featuring a nearly all-black cast” and celebrates “Black Power...in such a mainstream fashion,” and has a broader message. [3] Others call it an “epic that somehow manages to simultaneously be a comic-book blockbuster, a pulsating espionage thriller and an Afro-futurist family saga,” that the film draws “on elements from African history and tribal culture, as well as contemporary and forward-looking flourishes,” and a “rousing Afrofuturistic adventure” which “blow[s] you away with thunderous effects and also tackle ethnic and gender issues, crush racial stereotypes, celebrate women *and* condemn Trump-era notions of exclusionism.” Beyond that, *Time* claimed the movie had “[revolutionary power](#),” Carvell Wallace called it a “[defining moment](#)” for Blacks in the U\$ while reactionary leftist Shaun King [called it](#) an important “cultural moment,” historians said it taps [into](#) 500 years of Black history, while it [got other](#) praise as a “[cultural](#)

[touchstone](#),” is “revolutionary” [somehow](#), with viewing parties for the film supported by celebrities here, there and everywhere as noted in [The Root](#), [The Guardian](#), and [EW](#).

Not surprisingly, the hype about this film is totally wrong. There have already been [questions](#) about if the film is Islamophobic, with others saying Black resistance is liberalized to [comfort White people](#) and that the film is [plainly](#) counter-revolutionary. These perspectives are not wrong. The film not only adheres to “at least some dubious Hollywood conventions,” as stated by the *New York Times*, but it is “still a superhero movie,” as stated by *Variety*, a movie which “never veers beyond the most conventional contours of modern-day movie action,” as admitted by the *Washington Post*. Should it be any surprise that the film centers on a “militaristic monarchy” called Wakanda, which people claim is “fair and democratic,” which is a faulty statement without question. Bruce Dixon of *Black Agenda Report* [put it well](#): the movie focuses a “black royal family” and doesn’t show “real people the power they have over the real world.” Christopher Lebron adds to this, [writing](#) that the movie

...depends on a shocking devaluation of black American men...N’Jobu...soon understands that his people have the power to help all black people, and he plots to develop weapons using vibranium to even the odds for black Americans...[but] T’Chaka, however, insists N’Jobu has betrayed the people of Wakanda. He has no intention of helping any black people anywhere; for him and most Wakandans, it is Wakanda First...[not having] a vision of global black solidarity...[and using] Wakanda’s privilege to emancipate all black people...[the] contest between T’Challa and Killmonger that can only be read one way: in a world marked by racism, a man of African nobility must fight his own blood relative whose goal is the global liberation of blacks...A white man who trades in secrets and deception [the CIA man] is given a better turn than a black man whose father was murdered by his own family and who is left by family and nation to languish in poverty. That’s racist...Perhaps Killmonger’s main dream to free black people everywhere decisively earns him the fate of death...Black Panther is a movie about

black empowerment in which the only redeemed blacks are African nobles...Black Panther is not the movie we deserve.

Abdul Alkalimat adds to this [in his review](#), writing that the film is a “replay of the conflict of the 1960s between cultural nationalism and revolutionary nationalism, the US organization of Karenga and the Panthers of Huey Newton and Bobby Seale” with the king of Wakanda, cultural nationalist, being friends with the CIA, while the revolutionary is a “sort of gangster living a Fanonian fantasy that violence will change the world. He too is the son of a member of the royal family.” He adds that the film is a “commercial hodgepodge of references to other popular films,” ranging from James Bond, Star Wars, the Hobbit, Fast and Furious, and Stargate, concluding by saying that “a movie like this has the bait to pull us in like fish about to be hooked by the system...This film is dangerous and we must be vigilant against culture used to control and oppress.” Paul Street can have the final word here. He [argues](#) that the movie is “stealth ruling-class propaganda,” as part of the manufacture of consent by Hollyweird and the broad entertainment media in the US, because for one, Wakanda is “run by smart, warm, attractive, and benevolent Black royals” but is not a democracy but a hereditary monarchy which is “wedded to absolutism, aristocracy, and tribalism,” with everyday people being “backdrops at best.” He further adds that while “Wakanda could have used its great power to help Black Africa and the Black diaspora abroad,” they decided to keep “the country hidden behind its cloaking devices, keeping the wonders of a vibranium-enriched life...for itself.” The article goes on to say that since Killmonger (T’Chaka’s cousin) is from Oakland, the script writers undoubtedly knew about the Black Panthers, a person who wants to “turn Wakanda into an open revolutionary agent of Black liberation by all means necessary” and export revolution (Street says like Che Guevara and Trotsky, but Trotsky never did this), but that he has “become every bit as evil as : the amoral equivalent of : the racist oppressors he hates.” This means that there are “no warm, attractive, and inspiring advocates of Black pan-African revolution...only the cold and repellent Killmonger,” meaning that this movie is another “Hollywood update of white America’s longstanding distinction between the *good Black* and the *bad*

Black” with good Black pursuing “moderate ends in dignified and polite ways” and the bad Black “angry, violent, and undignified,” wanting to “wage war on the white oppressors.” In the case of the movie, T’Challa is equivalent to “Booker T. Washington, Sidney Poitier, Colin Powell, Oprah Winfrey, Eric Holder, and...Barack Obama” while Killmonger is equivalent to “Toussaint Louverture, Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner, Biggie Thomas, Malcolm X, Jeremiah Wright, Huey Newton, and the nightly urban crime reports all wrapped up together.” Not surprisingly is that T’Challa gets the “kindly white veteran CIA agent named Everett K. Ross,” which means the movie [falsely portrays](#) the CIA as a “friend of an independent and strong African state,” with the movie (despite some exceptions), absurdly portrays the “white senior CIA agent as a friend of an independently developing and autonomous Black African state.” The movie ends with saying global capitalism is good with the “CIA agent smiling as he watches his friend T’Challa tell the United Nations that Wakanda is joining the international community,” and then a teaser “after the full credits, when we see a forgotten white Marvel superhero...emerge from a Wakandan hut.” His article ends by asking: “Did you expect something different and more radical from Hollywood? Why?” He is right to ask this.

The movie also has another purpose: to connect with other superhero movies, getting people hooked another one of Marvel’s Hollywoodized comics. That was the goal of a movies like [Wonder Woman](#), [Black Panther](#), [Ant-Man](#), [Ironman](#), [X-Men](#), and [Hulk](#), and many others. [4] Once everyone is introduced in their own specific movies, then they can make movies where all of them fight together against a “common” enemy. Yet another product which is spread to the masses which reinforces capitalist ideology.

Blackkkklansman: Copaganda “at its finest”

Name of film: *Black Panther*

Date film was first shown: 2018

Date reviewed: October 15, 2018

Rating: N/A, review taken from “[The “Great White Hope” and the spread of U\\$ capitalist hegemony](#)” post on the Leftist Critic blog.

With this, it is worth talking about *Blackkkklansman*. A good starting point is Boots Riley’s [well-thought criticism](#) of the movie, engaging in what he calls a “political critique of the content of and timing of the film,” even though [Spike Lee](#) hugely influenced him and he holds the latter “in highest respect as a filmmaker.” He even says that having a story not being true is not necessarily a problem it is “being pushed as a true story and...its untrue elements that make a cop a hero against racism” with false parts trying “to make a cop the protagonist in the fight against racist oppression.” He goes on to write that the

...real Ron Stallworth infiltrated a Black radical organization for 3 years....where he did what all papers from the FBI’s...COINTELPRO...[working to] sabotage a Black radical organization whose intent had to do with at the very least fighting racist oppression...Ron Stallworth was part of COINTELPRO. COINTELPRO’s objectives were to destroy radical organizations, especially Black radical organizations...when White Supremacist organizations were infiltrated by the FBI and the cops, it was not to disrupt them...It was to use them to threaten and/or physically attack radical organizations...There was no bombing that Stallworth or the police thwarted...That was made up for the movie to make the police seem like heroes. There was no cop that got recorded and/or arrested due to saying things at a bar while drunk about how he’s ok with shooting Black folks...This was put in the movie to make Ron and the rest of the police look like they were interested in fighting racism, like they don’t all protect whatever racist and abusive cops are in there. This is a scene where the whole police force...work together with the fictional Black radical love interest to set the one racist cop up. Never happened...His partner that did the physical infiltration of the Klan was not Jewish and did not look Jewish to other people...If you really went up to Kwame Ture and asked him what we should do right now—as Ron Stallworth does in the film—he would have said what he

usually said: “Study!!!” But, it made the Black radical group look more dangerous to have Ture say something that sounded like he was calling for armed insurrection...Ron Stallworth looks like a hero, and so does his partner and the police force...Everything else is simply unverifiable stuff that ex-cop Ron Stallworth wrote in his memoir...the radical girlfriend says that she’s not down with him being a cop, then Stallworth...says that he’s for the liberation of his people at the same time as being a cop. All the fake stuff we just showed him go through argues his point for him. And then they hear something, and go, guns drawn, to investigate. They go down the hall together with the signature Spike Lee dolly...Cops and the movement against racist oppression united. This is the penultimate shot before the film goes to news footage of current White Supremacist attacks...for Spike to come out with a movie where story points are fabricated in order to make Black cop and his counterparts look like allies in the fight against racism is really disappointing...Spike Lee’s, Chiraq, plays into that myth [of black-on-black violence], and how that myth is used against movements for social justice...By now, many folks now know that Spike Lee was paid over \$200k to help in an ad campaign that was ‘I aimed at improving relations with minority communities. Whether it actually is or not, BlacKkKlansman feels like an extension of that ad campaign.

After reading this review, I think Boots Riley got it completely right. I did watch the movie myself and thought it was relatively good, but I think his criticism is completely valid. It really did positively portray the cops as “good” for fighting racial justice, specifically as those fighting White supremacists which was stopped by the “bad” police captain who made him destroy all the records. Stallworth is painted as the “hero” who revealed this story, keeping the records of the action. This is despite the fact that he literally participated in White supremacist meetings (via his White colleague) and did nothing to actually break up the group. Even if we accept the movie gospel, he stopped a bombing, but the group continued on. Additionally, while a few White supremacists were killed when the bomb went off in front of their car, they obviously recovered from this, with no effort to break-up

the group. The connection to current events, with live-TV images of what happened in Charlottesville, the orange menace, and others, was obviously meant to relate it to the present. The cops were portrayed as positive and “revolutionary” which is an utter joke which doesn’t recognize the role of the cops. Does Spike Lee forget the nature of the cops in his other movie, *Do the Right Thing*, the nature of Black revolutionaries in *Malcolm X*, another movie he made? It seems he has, instead making absurdist movies like *Blackkkklansman* and *Chirag*, the latter which is like a Shakespearean play with militaristic themes and supposed feminism which reduces men to literally being only about sex, which is just not true as it doesn’t recognize the power they actually hold in society as a whole. The only positive of *Blackkkklansman* is it does not have a white savior element which is shown in *Free State of Jones* (symbolized by a poor White farmer named Newton Knight, played by Matthew McConaughey) and *Selma* (symbolized by LBJ), *Lincoln* (symbolized by Lincoln), and a “respectable” Black man like Cecil Gaines (played by Forrest Whitaker) in *The Butler*. The last of those films is one of the worst, including a scene where the Cecil’s son, Louis, becomes a Black Panther and he angrily denounces the BPP as being horrible. Sadly, Cecil’s other son, Charlie, dies in Vietnam, and Louis leaves the BPP after they become “violent.” Of course, Cecil, who worked in the White House as a butler from 1957 to the 1980s (from Eisenhower to Reagan), it is not until the end of his time there that he advocates for advancement and equal pay for the Black staff. He only resigns when Reagan doesn’t support sanctions against apartheid South Africa, not anytime before then, later joining an anti-apartheid protest, and of course, celebrating Obama’s victory in 2008. What else would you expect from someone as much into Black respectability politics, growing up as a “house negro” in his early life on a White plantation in Macon, Georgia, in the 1920s and 1930s, as him? His son, Louis, by contrast, is the one who joined the SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference) where he engages in a sit-in at a segregated diner, goes on a freedom ride in Birmingham, participates in the Birmingham Children’s Crusade in 1963, participates in the voting rights movement in Selma in 1965, and runs for a seat in Congress. This is while Cecil just stands by.

...

To sum up this section, Spike Lee is clearly, as it currently stands, serving his role within the framework of cultural hegemony that Gramsci outlines, perhaps serving as an organic intellectual, or even if not, as a conduit for spreading capitalist ideology to the masses which will weaken any efforts to make the world a better place, especially those who skew to more radical and revolutionary solutions, which are sorely needed.

Hyperfutura: Some interesting concepts but overall a piece of trash

Name of film: *Hyperfutura*

Date film was first shown: 2013

Date reviewed: March 3, 2019

Rating: 3 out of 10

After seeing the two very different reviews on here, one very positive and another very negative, I was optimistic. But the movie on the whole is weak, has too many spliced video clips within, making seem like a strange, psychedelic trip or a weird YouTube video with bad production value. That nature of the movie made it a less enjoyable experience than it otherwise would have been. Perhaps there are some interesting concepts like the desire to fight against "the system" or criticizing medical experimentation and efforts at mind control. However, on the whole, this movie does not work and seems like a cheap version of 1984, although not as virulently anti-communist, making the latter terrible as a result. This is evidenced by the fact that Winston and Julia in that story are imprisoned together, similar to this story where the protagonist and a female are also together, giving him the illusion he is escaping.

Some may like the quality of this film, but I think that the fact that it includes public-domain clips (like some obviously of US military action in the Vietnam War) to visualize what is happening is utterly weak. Even after all this, the question remains at the end of the film: has the protagonist really

escaped or is this just a game by his captors? This question is never fully answered, as one could argue either way. The special effects were terrible as were many other effects, but the storyline was not completely fanciful, so that gives it some credibility. It reminds me a bit of Mr. Robot, in that you are questioning what is reality and what is fiction, which is always an interesting topic.

Even so, I would never recommend anyone watch this movie any time in the future due to its poor production value and the fact that on the whole this movie does not work, which is unfortunate because there is good potential. Please avoid this movie at all costs and don't waste your time watching it!

Joy: Triumph of capitalism and capitalist feminism?

Name of film: *Joy*

Date film was first shown: 2015

Date reviewed: January 19, 2019

Rating: 3 out of 10

While this movie had good acting the message was another sort of pull yourselves up by your bootstraps as the main character, Joy, enjoys newfound wealth and privilege. Having that as a premise of a movie is as capitalist as you get.

Perhaps there is more to say about this film. Possibly Jennifer Lawrence, playing Joy Mangano, does a good job in terms of her acting. But is it any surprise that this film brought in mixed reviews? I would say not at all. This film is, clearly, inherently flawed for reasons I have already noted.

Without wasting any more time on this review, it only makes sense to move onto another film that is rated higher than this one, a 3 out of 10.

The Fisher King: A problematic magical fable

Name of film: *The Fisher King*

Date film was first shown: 1991

Date reviewed: February 18, 2019

Rating: 3 out of 10

This movie would probably not get made today not because of some "PC" culture but rather because it is problematic for so many reasons. Jeff Bridges, playing a jerk (and former radio host) named Jack, is a bit of a nihilist, not caring much about the world around him after his radio show antics led to a massacre at a bar at the beginning of the film. In a drunken stupor he meets the second protagonist, a mentally traumatized man, "Perry," played by Robin Williams. Apart from Jack being an utter jerk, Perry is a creep in that he stalks a woman he likes. Yet she (Lydia) somehow still likes him even with this.

Having taken this all into account, this movie does not age well. Sure, Jack is a "reformed" jerk by the end, with his girlfriend Anne, while Perry and Lydia are together. But, all the people in the mental hospital are deemed unworthy, in a sense by the end of the film, and homeless people, like Perry, are seen as trash who can't really stand up for themselves...needing a savior.

As such this movie plays into those horrid Hollyweird stereotypes, an ending with a typical "good ending" of course and the magical fable just a bit too hokey.

With this I would never recommend anyone watch this movie under any circumstance as it would be an utter waste of your time.

***Eye in the Sky*: Good acting but weak "ethical dilemma"**

Name of film: *Eye in the Sky*

Date film was first shown: 2015

Date reviewed: January 19, 2019

Rating: 7 out of 10

This movie claims to show that show the ethical dilemma of drone warfare. While it has good acting, it is weak when it came to the ethical dilemma of drone warfare and killing innocent people.

There is more to say about this film, which has a rating of 7 out of 10. Other critics clearly gave this film mostly positive and favorable reviews, saying it was powerfully acted and gave a "spin on the

modern wartime political thriller" as noted on Rotten Tomatoes. Similarly, the accuracy of the advanced military technology in this film was also lauded. On that count, I will agree with these reviewers. I will also say that Helen Mirren, whom plays a UK Intelligence Officer named Colonel Katherine Powell, does a good job in her acting. Having not watched this film for some time, I cannot bring any other insights into this review.

With that, it seems right to bring this review to a film and perhaps revisit this film in the future to add other thoughts.

The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie: An odd, strange film

Name of film: *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*

Date film was first shown: 1972

Date reviewed: January 19, 2019

Rating: 8 out of 10

I watched this film recently because it seemed interesting and seemed to be about the ruling class of society, the bourgeoisie on the face of it. But as it turned out, this film was absurdist and very strange. By the end I asked myself "what is it that I watched and what I am going to take away from it?" I still don't know the answer to that question but I rate this an 8 because despite the previously mentioned nature of this movie, I enjoyed it.

Hilariously, this film is actually a Hollyweird film since it was distributed by 20th Century Fox. I think all of those in the case from Fernando Rey as Rafael Acosta to Robert Le Beal as the tailor, did a great job, making the film a bit more compelling. This film, which is like a set of vignettes strung together reminds me a bit of *The Meaning of Life* (1983) but only in that it also is a set of vignettes that are strung together, not that both films are similar in some way, but are actually very different. I don't really have much else to say about this film other than its weird nature and the fact that it is almost like a set of hallucinations on top of other hallucinations, making you question what is real and what is not.

In the end, this film perhaps has its positives but it is still not my favorite film by far, as other films which are also absurd, are much better, like *Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy* (2003) to give one example. As such, the rating of this film is justified and this review has come to a close.

***Woman Walks Ahead*: A “pro-indigenous” film which is actually anti-indigenous**

Name of film: *Woman Walks Ahead*

Date film was first shown: 2017

Date reviewed: October 15, 2018

Rating: N/A, review taken from “[The “Great White Hope” and the spread of U\\$ capitalist hegemony](#)” post on the Leftist Critic blog, with the second paragraph added on April 11, 2019.

I will say that [Woman Walks Ahead](#) is a bit of a white savior story which obviously distorts history (once you look into the actual story). It makes one of the main characters, a white woman named Catherine Weldon, played by Jessica Chastain, out to be a goof when she was actually an advocate for indigenous peoples. It also devalues all those who are said to be part of the Lakota people, rather than calling it the [racist name of “Sioux”](#) which was pinned on them by the French, except for Sitting Bull (played by Michael Greyeyes), which could be said to be an unfortunate oversight, but it also yet another way to erase indigenous people and their fight against U\$ imperialist killers, with Sam Rockwell, the stuckup colonel, Silas Grove, getting a prominent part. This, undoubtedly supports the dominant capitalist hegemony, with the producer and director, along with anyone below them, and the movie studio itself, complicit in this without a doubt.

There is something more to add to the review of this film. For one, the film is clearly historically inaccurate as the Dawes Act Treaty was never ratified by indigenous people. Additionally, Sitting Bull was disliked by U\$ officials in indigenous lands, whom were concerned by his support for the “Ghost Dance” (Messiah) movement more than his opposition to allotment and assimilation. Apparently, the death of Sitting Bull happened during a confusion in the morning of December 16, 1890, whether by sniper or something else. Otherwise, there is nothing else to say about this film other

than that it has similarities as a “white savior” movie to the *Free State of Jones* which is reviewed in in the pages to follow, with focus on the real story.

Free State of Jones: Another white savior movie

Name of film: *Free State of Jones*

Date film was first shown: 2016

Date reviewed: October 15, 2018

Rating: N/A, review taken from “[The “Great White Hope” and the spread of U\\$ capitalist hegemony](#)” post on the Leftist Critic blog. Other information was added on March 29, 2019.

Free State of Jones, however, has its positives in that it follows the struggle for Black rights across a historical timeline from during the Civil War until afterwards into the Reconstruction, which few movies I’ve seen before have done. Despite the White savior element, this did introduce me to the real story, as [noted by the Smithsonian](#):

...in Jones County, Mississippi...Newton Knight, a poor white farmer...led an extraordinary rebellion during the Civil War...[leading a] company of like-minded white men in southeast Mississippi...overthr[owing]...the Confederate authorities in Jones County and raised the United States flag over the county courthouse in Ellisville. The county was known as the Free State of Jones...After the Civil War, Knight took up with his grandfather’s former slave Rachel; they had five children together. Knight also fathered nine children with his white wife, Serena, and the two families lived in different houses on the same 160-acre farm. After he and Serena separated—they never divorced—Newt Knight caused a scandal that still reverberates by entering a common-law marriage with Rachel and proudly claiming their mixed-race children...The Knight Negroes, as these children were known, were shunned by whites and blacks alike. Unable to find marriage partners in the community, they started marrying their white cousins instead, with Newt’s encouragement. (Newt’s son Mat, for instance, married one of Rachel’s daughters by another man, and Newt’s daughter Molly married one of Rachel’s sons by another

man.) An interracial community began to form near the small town of Soso, and continued to marry within itself...There was some very modest cotton production in the area, and a small slaveholding elite that included Newt Knight's grandfather, but Jones County had fewer slaves than any other county in Mississippi, only 12 percent of its population. This, more than anything, explains its widespread disloyalty to the Confederacy, but there was also a surly, clan-ish independent spirit, and in Newt Knight, an extraordinarily steadfast and skillful leader...[Knight's] views were not unusual in Jones County. Newt's right-hand man, Jasper Collins, came from a big family of staunch Mississippi Unionists. He later named his son Ulysses Sherman Collins, after his two favorite Yankee generals, Ulysses S. Grant and William T. Sherman...Although he was against secession, Knight voluntarily enlisted in the Confederate Army once the war began. We can only speculate about his reasons. He kept no diary and gave only one interview near the end of his life, to a New Orleans journalist named Meigs Frost. Knight said he'd enlisted with a group of local men to avoid being conscripted and then split up into different companies. But the leading scholar of the Knight-led rebellion, Victoria Bynum, author of *The Free State of Jones*, points out that Knight had enlisted, under no threat of conscription, a few months after the war began, in July 1861. She thinks he relished being a soldier...In October 1862, after the Confederate defeat at Corinth, Knight and many other Piney Woods men deserted from the Seventh Battalion of Mississippi Infantry. It wasn't just the starvation rations, arrogant harebrained leadership and appalling carnage...Returning home, they found their wives struggling to keep up the farms and feed the children...In early 1863, Knight was captured for desertion and possibly tortured. Some scholars think he was pressed back into service for the Siege of Vicksburg, but there's no solid evidence that he was there...On the night of October 5, Major McLemore was staying at his friend Amos Deason's mansion in Ellisville, when someone—almost certainly Newt Knight—burst in and shot him to death. Soon afterward,

there was a mass meeting of deserters from four Piney Woods counties. They organized themselves into a company called the Jones County Scouts and unanimously elected Knight as their captain. They vowed to resist capture, defy tax collectors, defend each other's homes and farms, and do what they could to aid the Union...In March 1864, Lt. Gen. Leonidas Polk informed Jefferson Davis, the president of the Confederacy, that Jones County was in "open rebellion" and that guerrilla fighters were "proclaiming themselves 'Southern Yankees.'" They had crippled the tax collection system, seized and redistributed Confederate supplies, and killed and driven out Confederate officials and loyalists, not just in Jones County but all over southeast Mississippi...That spring was the high-water mark of the rebellion against the Rebels. Polk ordered two battle-hardened regiments into southeast Mississippi, under the command of Piney Woods native Col. Robert Lowry. With hanging ropes and packs of vicious, manhunting dogs, they subdued the surrounding counties and then moved into the Free State of Jones. Several of the Knight company were mangled by the dogs, and at least ten were hanged, but Lowry couldn't catch Knight or the core group. They were deep in the swamps, being supplied with food and information by local sympathizers and slaves, most notably Rachel...After Lowry left, proclaiming victory, Knight and his men emerged from their hide-outs, and once again, began threatening Confederate officials and agents, burning bridges and destroying railroads to thwart the Rebel Army, and raiding food supplies intended for the troops. They fought their last skirmish at Sal's Battery, also spelled Sallsbattery, on January 10, 1865, fighting off a combined force of cavalry and infantry. Three months later, the Confederacy fell...The third act of the film takes place in Mississippi after the Civil War. There was a phase during early Reconstruction when blacks could vote, and black officials were elected for the first time. Then former Confederates violently took back control of the state and implemented a kind of second slavery for African-Americans. Once again disenfranchised, and terrorized by the Klan, they were exploited through sharecropping and legally segregated...Ross thinks Knight's character and beliefs are

most clearly revealed by his actions after the war. He was hired by the Reconstruction government to free black children from white masters who were refusing to emancipate them...In 1876, Knight deeded 160 acres of land to Rachel, making her one of very few African-American landowners in Mississippi at that time...In the film, Marsh and Blaylock appear briefly in a courthouse scene. For the two of them, the Knight family saga has continued into the 20th century and beyond. Their cousin Davis Knight, who looked white and claimed to be white, was tried for the crime of miscegenation in 1948, after marrying a white woman. The trial was a study in Mississippian absurdity, paradox, contradiction and racial obsessiveness. A white man was convicted of being black; the conviction was overturned; he became legally white again.

The Meg: Worst movie ever

Name of film: *The Meg*

Date film was first shown: 2018

Date reviewed: January 19, 2019

Rating: 1 out of 10

This has be one of the worst movies I have seen since that horrible one called "The Shallows." This is like a dumbed down version of Jaws - yikes! The black guy (DJ, played by Page Kennedy) is a stereotype, the fat Chinese kid is dumb and almost gets eaten by the shark, and there is an annoying rich guy, Morris (played by Rainn Wilson). Luckily he gets eaten, which was actually my favorite part of the movie because he is an utter snob and a horrible person who deserved to die.

There is a reason I rated this film 1 star out of 10. There are the typical Hollyweird themes of love and intrigue, along with horror. But this is the most silly horror film, if you can call it that, that I've probably ever seen. You could praise the acting of Jason Statham as Jonas Taylor but I still don't think that would save the film from the depths of horribleness. Not at all.

So please, do not watch this movie in a thousand years. You will regret the time you spent watching this piece of trash.

Ladies of Leisure: A solid movie but weaker than Capra's other works

Name of film: *Ladies of Leisure*

Date film was first shown: 1930

Date reviewed: March 4, 2019

Rating: 7 out of 10

Recently I've been watching a good number of Frank Capra's movies and this one was next in line. I was optimistic at the beginning of the film but was quickly disappointed. There were some funny parts throughout but movies like *The Strong Man* (1926, silent) and *The Power of the Presses* (1928, silent) were much stronger. The fact that Capra's silent movies are better than this movie does not bode well. Compare this movie to the 1928 silent comedy by Capra, *That Certain Thing*. There are lot of similarities in that the woman that male protagonist loves is a "gold digger," or as one character says in this movie a "gold miner," but this movie misses the social commentary of that movie. I would argue that while there may be some commentary it is not strong, other than the protagonist's parents not wanting to marry "below his class" and the occasional wild parties.

Additionally, I'm not sure what to take away from this film at the end: that "gold diggers" get what they want or that love crosses class lines. I just found this movie on the whole much less compelling than Capra's other films. It was interesting however to have female characters who worked and schemed together, refuting the idea they are dumb and push-overs. Perhaps I will watch this again in the future but not anytime soon.

First Man: A powerful movie which had unnecessary criticism

Name of film: *First Man*

Date film was first shown: 2018

Date reviewed: February 4, 2019

Rating: 8 out of 10

While I have watched dramas about space travel like *2001* and *Interstellar*, along with ones about the space race like *Hidden Figures* and *The Right Stuff*, but this movie is in a league of its own. It shows the trauma Neil Armstrong and his family experienced with the death of his daughter in the early 1960s, along with the death of fellow astronauts over the years. It also shows a space program enshrined in NASA which was in shambles, with all sorts of problems. I also liked the inclusion of criticism of the space program, although including Gil-Scott Heron's "Whitey on the Moon" leads to historical inaccuracy as the song came out in 1970, not 1968. Additionally, while this film is a powerful drama, it really only focuses on white people, specifically white men for the most part, with women, apart from Neil's wife, pushed to the sidelines, which leads to problems. Still, I would say this film is still good, despite the absurd criticism of U\$ flag not being the focus of the film.

While saying all of that, the movie has a lasting impact on you in part because it humanizes the astronauts while the press and public see them as almost celebrities of sorts. They are treated as almost guinea pigs by NASA, to go by the film's depiction, which is almost 100% men from what the movie shows, not showing the woman "computers" whom were calculating the information, which is an unfortunate oversight coloring the movie in the wrong way. I'd also add that this film makes the technology they use seem laughable primitive compared to what we have now, almost like the craft they are on will fall apart at any moment! This makes the drama even more intense than it would be otherwise, to say the least.

In the end, the criticism of this movie, mainly by those who are uber-patriotic about the U\$, led to depressed ticket sales, which is unfortunate because of the fact that a powerful movie such as this one was sidelined.

Half Nelson: Strange but depressing

Name of film: *Half Nelson*

Date film was first shown: 2006

Date reviewed: January 19, 2019

Rating: 7 out of 10

From what I can remember about this movie, the teacher (played by Ryan Gosling) is a drug user (of cocaine I think) and is roughed up by drug dealers. The movie ends, if I remember right, on a relatively depressing note, which is reflective of the reality of the education system within the U.S.

There's more to say about this film. It got critical acclaim from critics, seen as engaging and elegant. This movie, from my memory, definitely fit that description. Perhaps it has some of the same themes of *The Hate U Give*, a film that came out just last year, more than a film like *Akeelah and the Bee* (2006) which clearly had negative stereotypes of Asian people and seemed to have racist undertones as well.

Otherwise, I'm going to end the review of this film and move onto another one, that is rated something different than 7 out of 10.

Rain Man: Autism, Aspergers, and Rain Man

Name of film: *Rain Man*

Date film was first shown: 1988

Date reviewed: January 19, 2019

Rating: 7 out of 10

Generally I think this movie is great, although I question the motives of the brother, Charles "Charlie" Babbitt, played by Tom Cruise in "rescuing" his brother, Raymond "Ray" Babbitt, played by Dustin Hoffman. Also since this movie served as the popular conception of Aspergers it has led to a lot of absurd misconceptions which is why I rate this 7 out of 10.

There is more to say about this film, however. Apart from the strong acting of Cruise and Hoffman, this film in some way criticizes the medical establishment. It's funny also that the scene where Hoffman's character talks about the safety records of planes was cut from showings of the movie on airlines he mentioned, except for Australia-based Qantas, which he said had no crashes!

Other than that, I can't really say much more about this film other than it was relatively enjoyable, and hereby end this movie review.

Room: Haunting but rewarding?

Name of film: *Room*

Date film was first shown: 2015

Date reviewed: January 19, 2019

Rating: 8 out of 10

This movie has a certain spark to it. The first part is about a family stuck in a small room, trapped there by a sexist pig of a man. The mother (played Brie Larson) by finally gets them (herself and her son, played by Jacob Tremblay) out of there with the second half the movie about them adapting to the outside world. All in all, this is definitely a rewarding film to watch without question, clearly deserving a rating of 8 out 10.

Those reviewers that said that this film is a harrowing and rewarding experience are right, as it is a film that is powerful without question. One major theme of this film is about survival and finding your place in the world, something which many, many people can relate to. It also deals with trauma from rape, as the mother is raped by a man called "Old Nick" (played by Sean Bridgers) at the film's beginning, which is important to portray on film.

With that, I think that this review is sufficient and should come to a close.

Snowden: Annoying, boring film

Name of film: *Snowden*

Date film was first shown: 2016

Date reviewed: January 19, 2019

Rating: 3 out of 10

Sure, this film was a fast-paced drama. But at the same time it also was distorting the reality of what happened for something that ended up not having much of an impact at all, only leading to a few changed minds then people forgot about it all. All in all this movie is not worth anyone's time.

But one paragraph is not, in and of itself, enough to grant this film a rating of 3 out of 10. I would say that Joseph Gordon-Levitt plays a good role as Edward Snowden, and Shailene Woodley does the same as Lindsay Mills, Snowden's girlfriend. I guess after following this whole saga over the past few years and having Snowden become a celebrity and all, with the archive of his records recently deleted by The Intercept, this film seems relatively annoying and boring. The fact that Oliver Stone made this film is a damn shame, as he's made much better films in the past like Scarface (1983), Platoon (1986), and Wall Street (1987) to name a few.

With that, my review of this film comes to a close.

A Streetcar Named Desire: Classic film

Name of film: *A Streetcar Named Desire*

Date film was first shown: 2016

Date reviewed: January 19, 2019

Rating: 3 out of 10

This romance and classic drama, based on a play by Tennessee Williams, is for the ages. It's depiction of mental illness has become part of our culture and it stands as a tome of Hollywood. Marlon Brando plays a powerful part, as Stanley Kowalski, without a doubt, as does the rest of the cast.

This film was classic enough for *The Simpsons* to pay homage to it in their episode, A Streetcar Named Marge (s4, e2). This film not only focuses on a troubled woman, Blanche DuBois (played by Jessica Tandy) but it also focuses on male violence, as at one she is raped by Stanley, along with a clash between classes, with Stanley and his wife (and Blanche's sister) Stella being of a different class. After all, this is no surprise as Stanley himself is an abusive husband to Stella, but she stays with him anyway. Even Stanley's friend, Mitch, tries to sexually assault Blanche. Can she not catch a break!

Even Blanche's sister does not believe Blanche's truthful story that Stanley assaulted her! For the doctor to take her away at the end, when she says the famed line of "Whoever you are, I have always depended on the kindness of strangers," is a telling part of the film itself.

With that, I think this review has come to a close, with this film clearly deserving a rating of 9 out of 10.

Manchester by the Sea: Well-acted, un-sympathetic protagonist

Name of film: *Manchester by the Sea*

Date film was first shown: 2016

Date reviewed: January 19, 2019

Rating: 7 out of 10

From what I remember of this movie, it had a protagonist hated by the whole town for letting his children be killed by a fire he started (accidentally due to his carelessness), which makes him totally unsympathetic and a terrible person. Even so the movie is very well-acted.

There's much more to justify a rating of 7 out of 10 for this "tragedy film," as Wikipedia calls it. Casey Affleck plays a strong role as Lee Chandler but so does Michelle Williams as Randi, along with the rest of the cast. There is a lot about themes of grief and reticence to say the least, as Lee lives with trauma for years to come. The fact that the events of the film take place in a New England community which is blue-collar is an important part of the story itself, unlike other films. The fact that Affleck himself was a sexual harasser in real life, leading to legal battles for years, actually fits, in some way, with his character in this movie, although not completely, to say the least!

In the end, I think I have provided a good review, for the time being, of this film, and will let what others say about this film stand.

Dodes'ka-den: Strange but interesting

Name of film: *Dodes'ka-den*

Date film was first shown: 1970

Date reviewed: January 19, 2019

Rating: 7 out of 10

This movie, also known as Dodes'ka-den, was strange but interesting. Everyone had their own routine during the day and lived in such slums. I am not sure what to make of this movie in the end, what its message was, or if it was worth watching it at all.

You may ask: why would you rate this film as a 7 out of 10? This film was Kurosawa's first film which was in color and it being a commercial failure upon its initial release, with its reception in Japan sending Kurosawa into a depression and an attempt of suicide in 1971! Still, it continued to draw mixed responses and is considered by some to be one of the world's greatest films, even winning the

Belgian Film Critics Association's Grand Prix award. I found the interplay of the characters enjoyable, although the question remains: what will happen to all these characters in the urban shantytown...and will anyone care for them?

Kurosawa is an interesting director whose style is bold and dynamic, strongly influenced by those in Western cinema but also being quite distinct. While this film was a strong drama, I liked his other films such as Rashomon (1950) which showed the same story from various viewpoints, Seven Samurai (1954), The Hidden Fortress (1958), and The Bad Sleep Well (1960), along with parts from Dreams (1990). Perhaps I will rewatch those films and review them on here in the future. With that, my review of this film comes to an end.

Hanna: Action, shooting, and gore

Name of film: *Hanna*

Date film was first shown: 2011

Date reviewed: January 19, 2019

Rating: 2 out of 10

It has been some time since I watched this movie but I remember it was filled with action and gore, which made the movie unwatchable from my perspective. I understand why people would watch this but I will not watch it again in the future. No way.

Some people may watch this because it has Saoirse Ronan as the protagonist (Hanna), raised in northern Finland's wilderness by her father, an ex-CIA operative, while a CIA agent (played by Cate Blanchett) tries to track her down and eliminate her, along with her father. You could even say that this film had good performances from Ronan and Blanchett along with exciting action sequences and relevant themes. Even if you said all that, I would still say this film, is not, on the whole, very strong and as such deserves a rating of 2 out of 10.

With that, my review of this film comes to a close.

Old Man & the Gun: Slow-paced movie showcases Redford's last role

Name of film: *Old Man & the Gun*

Date film was first shown: 2018

Date reviewed: January 19, 2019

Rating: 6 out of 10

Tonight I watched this movie, which is slow-paced and it features Robert Redford as a gentleman robber of banks, with Casey Affleck playing a good part, perhaps, as a cop on the case. It turns out he doesn't rob banks or on the run from the law for a reason but he likes the thrill and puts himself in situations he is on the run from the law. All in all, this movie is ok but I would not watch it again, either in the near or far future.

Still, there is more to say about this film than just one paragraph which can justify a rating of 6 out of 10. This film got generally favorable reviews from movie critics but I disliked this film more than those critics. The reason is not its slow-pacing, which can be good in some movies, but rather that it was not intellectually stimulating, it doesn't get you to really think about anything beyond yourself. I

did like the fact that he was on the run from "the law" and is challenging the system in that way, but that is clearly something of his own making, not like he is some hero or something.

Anyway, I think that adequately covers this movie, so I'm going to end this review there

Black Hawk Down: a pro-military narrative to attack

Name of film: *Black Hawk Down*

Date film was first shown: 2001

Date reviewed: January 31, 2017

This text is taken from a post on the Leftist Critic blog titled “[Bernie Sanders: an imperialist worth despising](#)” and is in context of criticism of social-democrat-imperialist Bernie Sanders.

Sanders’s imperial foreign policy is nothing new. In May 1993, Sanders [voted for](#) the use of US troops in Somalia. Years before the intervention, Mohamed Said Barre, who had taken power in a military coup in 1969, originally allied with the revisionist Soviet Union as a socialist, even if he was not really socialist. By 1977 he was charting his own horrid course, with expansionist desires by declaring war on Ethiopia, then helped by the Soviets, and at that time, the U\$ assisted his country. By 1991, after his methods became more ruthless, a group of rebels drove Barre from Mogadishu, leading to a vacuum in the country and civil discord of monumental proportions. By 1993, when the U\$ intervened, there had been a UN operation (Operation Restore Hope or UNITAF) to provide humanitarian assistance the previous year, under President Bush’s direction, with U\$ troops comprising the major part of the effort, but this faltered, leading to another operation. This ensuing operation, continuing until 1995, was challenged by “rebel” Somali military commander Muhammad Farah Aideed, an individual that the U\$-led UN force was trying to kill, leading to two Black Hawk helicopters in a fiery battle being shot down. As a result, this incident led President Clinton to pull U\$. troops out of combat not long after and “[all U.S. troops left the country in March 1994](#),” resulting in supposed “[curtailed](#)” U\$ interventions in the future, with the UN mission ending on [March 1995](#) even as fighting continued.

This intervention, which was “memorialized” in numerous books and a film, *Black Hawk Down*, a Hollywood flick which [predictably portrayed the Somali people](#) as “wild savages” who don’t know what they are doing, even though Somalis has good reason to be angry about the U\$ military presence. The movie’s pro-military narrative showed that it aligned with the position of Brigadier General John S. Brown [who declared](#) that the intervention was about rescuing “a people and a state from anarchy and chaos” and called those who fought in the a [supposedly “humanitarian”](#) conflict “heroes.” Such deception was also repeated [by the compliant corporate media](#), which [hyped up](#) the pictures of starving Somalis, of course. As Brendan Sexton III put it, “one of the true tragedies of the war in Somalia [which some rightly call [a debacle](#)] was the support that it received from liberals and even radicals,” by which he means people like Sanders. Apart from having the blood of thousands of Bosnians on his hands, Sanders also, by voting for U\$ troops in Somalia, was expressing his consent for the killing of almost 10,000 people in the ground war for Mogadishu before the one-day battle in early October 1993. He was also consenting to the continued destruction of Somalia in a civil war which [has raged](#) since 1986, which begun with the Somali rebellion. It continues today with the U\$ military, federal Somali government, and African Union troops fighting against Islamic reactionary groups, continuing the trend of U\$ military intervention on the African continent.

In 1999, [he justified](#) the brutal U\$ bombing in Bosnia, [voting to](#) use U\$ ground troops in 1995, and quoted a member of the German Green Party, Joschka Fischer, in favor of the campaign. He [argued](#) that “if anyone thinks there is a simple solution to this problem [in Bosnia], then you know very little about this problem...[this bombing] means standing up against genocide. It's a contradiction, but we have to live with it. If we accept Milosevic as a winner, it would be the end of the Europe I believe in.” He went on to, after an audience member told him that he had “sold out,” justify the bombing by declaring that “I ask you to think about what happens to the eight hundred thousand men, women, and children who have been pushed out of their homes!...What do you do to a butcher who has lined up people and shot them?” and then, after saying he opposed a massive ground force in Bosnia, weirdly

said, "I don't know what to do, but I'll tell you what I am doing, what I am trying to do." He later said he was "on the phone...with the White House" to help negotiate a settlement, aligning with his [defense of Clinton](#) the year before from Congressional Republicans who called for his impeachment.

Citizen Four: Snowden and the allure of Hollyweird

Name of film: *Citizen Four*

Date film was first shown: 2014

Date reviewed: May 20, 2017

This text is taken from a post on the Leftist Critic blog titled "["By all means, doubt me": Continuing the criticism of Snowden](#)" and is in context of criticism of Edward Snowden, a reactionary whistleblower, who support "nice" imperialism.

That year [2015], Mr. Valentine [wrote](#) an article which criticized *Citizen Four*, way before that horrid Oliver Stone "Snowden" movie had come on the scene. He notes how the documentary begins with Greenwald sitting in a hotel room in Hong Kong with Snowden and Ewen MacAskill, a *Guardian* reporter, with Snowden "earnestly explaining his selfless motive," saying that he wants the store to be about "the mechanisms of the thought police" not about himself. However, Greenwald has different ideas, thinking, as Mr. Valentine argues, that he can turn Snowden into a big celebrity and "Hollywood star," showing Greenwald as maneuvering the "naive, trusting, vulnerable" Snowden into being a celebrity, with Snowden submitting himself to such manipulation. The article goes on to say that Greenwald's money-making scheme from the Snowden files, which calls "GG Industries Inc" (now including all of those at *The Intercept*) sees Snowden as "a celebrity and perpetual money-making myth for the faux gauche, in the mold of Dan Ellsberg" or Bob Dylan, who he argues "creates its special kind of neurasthenia, a complex of neuroses that render the celebrity incapable of honest self-awareness or genuine human interaction," a form of the "celebrity virus." Mr. Valentine goes on. He says that such celebrities direct "all of America's latent revolutionary impulses into America's unique brand of post-modern fascism," that the *Citizen Four* documentary deceives the audience as a classist "propaganda

film" that protects the CIA while exploiting Snowden to be a celebrity, serving the bourgeois, and being "the biggest fluff piece ever contrived." His criticism goes beyond this by saying that the producers of the documentary cannot be critical of Snowden, which manipulates its audience, who is a "dedicated counter-revolutionary," who doesn't want to reveal CIA "methods...names and locations" which he calls, probably accurately, a "fascistic streak" and adds that in the end, *Citizen Four* is "a propaganda film espousing the virtues of the faux gauche and its self-induced delusion, and self-perpetuating illusion, that the capitalist system is capable of correcting itself." The rest of the article writes itself.

Mr. Valentine's criticism is on par with [what Tarzie says](#), who goes farther by saying that "there can be no intelligent, leftist consideration of Snowden, or any other figure of similar stature for that matter, without recognizing that we know him entirely through instruments specially designed to prevent and suppress any dissent that's likely to disquiet members of the ruling class and their state security apparatus," that the few "genuinely entertaining aspects of The Snowden Show at its peak was the struggle of his hand-picked media proxies [such as Greenwald] to look like enemies of the state as they flew from place to place, entirely without incident," and that Snowden was "running what's known in intelligence as a [limited hangout](#)." He added that Snowden "encourages us to focus entirely on signals intelligence, and...on only one of the federal agencies that collect signals intelligence," such as the CIA, leading to a "trivial conversation about surveillance, that...chillingly reminds people they're always being watched" and that Snowden & Co. have fostered a "swamp of pseudo-dissidence."

While I tend to be more critical of Tarzie, who defines himself as an anarchist living in Seattle for all I know, after he blocked me on his now-suspended account (@TheRancidSector), even though I still follow his other account without interruption. He blocked me then when I criticized him for calling for another Twitter user to kill themselves since they said something that made him angry, and didn't respond for some time afterwards to his "steaming" tweets, showing that he didn't give me a chance to explain myself. Still, I think that he has a good point here when it comes to Snowden. He does tend, as does the rest of the sycophants, to focus on the NSA and not other intelligence agencies, with a few

exceptions. However, I wouldn't say he was running a "limited hangout" only because I don't know enough about the subject admittedly and it risks getting pulled into the conspiracist realm of the never-ending theorizing about the JFK assassination or 9/11 attacks, which is a waste of everyone's time. Instead of worrying yourself with trying to "investigate" these topics on your own and get stuck in the conspiracist loop, perhaps it is better to organize against capitalism, revealing actual conspiracies about the capitalist class oppressing the proletariat rather than theories you get from magical authors/commentators (like Alex Jones or Webster Tarpley to name a few) who claim to "know the truth" and are part of an industry to promote these theories to the populace for a buck.